

The
People



Chronicles Of Culture

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The People



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Editor's Comment

"In America," a man of functional wit told me once, "people means those who live in the East Sixties or shop on Rodeo Drive. Those who live in Queens or Tupelo, Mississippi, and consider a good hot dog with chili delicious are Americans."

He himself wore French designer jeans, custom-made cowboy boots, an androgynous shirt open to the navel; the hair on his chest had been styled, treated with an antigraying lotion and was adorned with his zodiac sign on one golden chain with a Victorian gem-studded crucifix. He obviously was people. "Between us," he added magnanimously, "people means a bunch of stinking elitists here."

This must be why, I thought to myself, I'm plagued by that quaint odor when leafing through *People* magazine.

* * *

The American liberal's most cherished pretension is, of course, the notion that he speaks *on behalf* of the people. Like anyone else, he's free to do it in the land of the free. To speak *in the name* of the people involves some complications: the liberal does not doubt for a moment that he possesses a mandate to do exactly that, but to maintain his credentials among his peers, he is better off if he professes a dislike for hot dogs. Torn between his sense of mission and his feeling for refinement, he deems it a greater honor to opt for the latter. Often, the dilemma produces discomforts which are rarely confided to shrinks. It's more becoming to talk about sexual, rather than ideological, frustrations to them. How could one admit to a psychoanalyst that one dreams about an endorsement from those he subliminally scorns—those who like navy-bean soup, regard churchgoing as fulfillment, and indulge in trivial music? Thus, instead of re-examining his propensities, the liberal turns to political populism or assorted Marxian denominations: they offer him a cozy, radical confusion of mind that works like a tranquilizer. Fuming noisily in his newspapers against religious hypocrisy, *petit bourgeois* hypocrisy and pharisaism of bygone establishments, he erects a giant monument of his own cant. He feels free to speak in the name of *all* women, *all* blacks and *all* the wretched of this earth. But he never hesitates to clamor rabidly for the right of a few libertines to superimpose their concept of "tolerance" upon millions of parents who may jointly reject it in a high-school curriculum. He declares such an imposition to be a civil right of the people—for he, of course, is people.

* * *

There's little I abhor more than the populists who tell me that they love people and know all about what kind of happiness is most suitable for the inhabitants of East Brooklyn or Kankakee. I have yet to see a populist who is immune

to dictatorial passions, an unbridled desire for celebrity at any price, and French cuisine—which most American populists tend to view as spiritual protest against chili. The life story of a certain Mr. Sam Brown is keenly didactic in this respect and can provide insights into the rancid layers of the American experience.

As one of the shrillest leaders of the anti-Vietnam War movement, Mr. Brown did more to install communism in Southeast Asia than all the armies of General Giap put together. Naturally, he conducted his business with a clear conscience in the name of the people: after all, his North Vietnamese protégés were killing not people but Americans. People were safely burning the American flag in Central Park and worshiping Ho Chi Minh in the ivy halls of folksy institutions like Harvard and Yale. In return for such correct instincts and credentials, Mr. Brown was eventually offered a high-ranking government job by Mr. Carter, the incoming president, who knew well how to properly distinguish between people and Americans. When Mr. and Mrs. Brown, both paragons of procommunist dedication, reached an annual income bracket of \$90,000 they were interviewed by *Women's Wear Daily*, the fiercely populist organ whose societal ideal is to fight for the needy from *Le Plaisir* while wearing the armor provided by Bloomingdale's. When asked whether his passionate commitment to the poor did not somehow conflict with his startling affluence, Mr. Brown replied with dialectical finesse: "I don't think poor people want other people to be like them. People don't want to be poor. Poor people should have just as much chance to dress well and live in a nice house as I have had."

"He sounds as if he had just won the class struggle in an eatery with a \$120-per-person dinner *prix fixe*," remarked a young woman with an unfashionable sense of equity after reading the interview; she seemed to be shaken by the complexity of the human conscience. "Isn't it despicable? Or even immoral?"

"It's liberal," I sighed. "And radical à la *Sans Souci*, Georgetown, Elaine's, *New York* magazine's editorial offices. In those people's journals like *Nation*, or the *New York Review of Books*, which are intellectually perfumed with a class hatred directed at split-level-dwelling Americans, Mr. Brown's stance is called an effort toward decency, or generosity, or moral spaciousness, or cultural openness, or healthy shedding of inhibitions."

"It stinks," she concluded. I found her verbal impulse quite precise.

* * *

It's evident that the more Mr. Brown hates and sponges on Americans, the more he sees himself as people. There's a strange sort of accuracy to his feeling; whenever an attempt is made to rarefy notions, American journalists, those can-

nibals who gorge on common sense, routinely confer the vocable "people" upon the most unexpected specimens.

A friend of mine, a lady of flaming liberal persuasion, took part in the historic Chicago flare-up during the 1968 Democratic Party convention. She marched against the war, the system, Amerika—meaningless formulations—and for refreshing revolution, social change, inebriation with progress—even sillier suggestions. Her radical storm troopers were confronted by a squad of Chicago police, defenders of the established order known for their rather brusque manner in dealing with opponents. There were black constables among them, and some other husky men with distinctly Slavic features. My friend, who is rather diminutive, when faced with the possibility of being prodded with a club—an unforeseen offense—is said to have exclaimed with furious indignation: "Don't you dare raise your hand against the people, you pig!" Now, it must be made perfectly clear that the lady in question was a multimillionaire, daughter of patrician New England stock, the descendant of three generations of high government officials. I remember asking her meekly: "My dear, are you certain that in an encounter with Polish-American or black officers, loathsome as they might have been to you, *you* were the appropriate representative of the people? In that case, who were they? Members of Chase Manhattan's board of directors or the Knickerbocker Club?" She seemed to be scandalized: "They were fascists," she asserted firmly. "I was people. At least, at that moment."

It was then when I realized that in the 60's America had come so close to the brink of an abyss that it should be considered a miracle that it did not tumble down forever. The American civilization had been, for more than four centuries, structured on reason: in the 60's, its fundamentals, grounded in rationality, logic, empiricism, broke down as if under the pressure of a tectonic catastrophe. Lie was declared to be truth, and was consumed by many like a communion wafer. Genuine human desires were supplanted by phony cravings, and these—propounded through the dank sewers of mass communication by the giants of journalistic riffraff—came to be declared salvation. The Stalinist wickedness of Vietnamese communists became the official morality of the Sam Browns, their vile ticket to future riches. The most nourishing conventions, which once made the human condition distinguishable from barbarity, collapsed. A new reality in which nihilism meant freedom and sensibility equaled oppression was in the making. We know now that it did not prevail, but how close were we to a holocaust, how much did it reduce the dignity of our existence, dwarf our sense of purpose?

* * *

I stood on Fifth Avenue watching a parade of the Veterans of Foreign Wars. Superannuated, tired legionnaires with

wooden rifles marched sloppily but cheerfully, pretending to be still jaunty and vigorous, while knowing well, but obviously without resignation, how far over the hill they really were. Next to me a trio of two men and a woman, all in their early twenties, brimming with routinely standardized rebellion, as was customary in those days of all-encompassing sham, heckled the legionnaires. The men were bearded, beefy, unwashed, visibly well-fed and drugged, dressed in dirty ponchos, beads and those poor-cowpoke's duds which their ilk used to purchase for hundreds of dollars in Greenwich Village boutiques so they could look like starving Bolivian peasantry or army deserters in Sweden. They were shouting: "Power to the people!" having, of course, themselves in mind, and: "Death to baby killers!" having, of course, the veterans in mind. The marchers smiled helplessly, as if they were uncertain what to think about such a travesty, or idiocy, not knowing whether these three were really aware of what they were shouting. Those legionnaires were small-town mechanics, grocers, car dealers who, in all likelihood, had considered themselves to be people throughout their entire lives. They fought in wars to defend the people, people's institutions, traditions and sentiments, all of which seemed to them their only unquestionable and inviolable reality. People's freedom had meant to them freedom even for these dregs of posh American suburbia, who were masquerading as victims of some unnamed injustice, and who were right then execrating them from a New York sidewalk. In the perplexed gawkishness of the legionnaire's stares I saw a mixture of despair and defenselessness—the simple people's everlasting inferiority when it comes to dealing with those who usurp the word "people" and employ it in the most ignominious fibbing in order to subjugate people.

Thus, amidst the world's most famous skyscrapers, once so stubbornly defended by the poor veterans, I asked myself nagging questions. Why is it that the dowdy marchers, when juxtaposed with those who are denigrating them, transmute—at least in my eyes—into sublime idealists, mankind's price and virtue—and they do not even know it? Why is it that those who perversely proclaim liberation from imaginary fetters, snort cocaine, have always had everything in profligate abundance and were never hungry, strive so recklessly to decide what suffering and sacrifice are, who should eat and how much? Why won't they ever realize, and even less admit, that those who live by the left-radical gospel are and always have been the most ignoble causal factors of the worst miseries, oppressions, woes, cruelties, agonies and persecutions to befall humanity? What gives them the right to feel morally superior to the legionnaires, and why do they perceive this repulsive arrogance as lofty rectitude and use their P.R. propagandists to inject it into the national consciousness? Surely Messrs. Mencken and Sinclair Lewis looked quite sinful from my observation point

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Opinions & Views

To Think Despair and Live Hope

Herbert R. Lottman: *Albert Camus*; Doubleday & Co.; New York.

by Stephen L. Tanner

"If they only knew who I really was," Camus once remarked to his secretary and confidante. He was not an easy man to understand. In fact, he has been much misunderstood and his writings misconstrued. For example, though he firmly and repeatedly insisted he was not an existentialist, he remains, apparently inalterably, categorized as an existentialist of the Sartre variety. Some consider him primarily a moral philosopher; others insist he was above all a literary artist. His name is almost synonymous with pessimism, yet in 1957 when he received the Nobel Prize for literature he called himself "an irradicable optimist." Communist philosophers have called him a reactionary, and reactionaries have said he was a communist. Atheists have accused him of a disguised Christianity, while Christians have deplored his atheism. His books have always evoked strikingly contradictory responses and interpretations. Just a few years before his death, he admitted, "To tell the truth I haven't managed to work out my own internal contradictions."

One picks up this massive biography, Camus's first, with the hope of resolving some of these contradictions. But even after nearly 700 pages of facts and information, Camus—the inner man—remains elusive and ambiguous. Lottman has been ambitious and comprehensive in his research of biographical facts, but he is often indiscriminate in selection. Here is a characteristic sample. He provides a description and historical summary since the 13th century of the village near which Camus died in a high speed automobile accident,

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and such gratuitous detail blurs emerging patterns of attitudes and behavior. And since Lottman chose not to offer any analysis of Camus's writings, confining himself to a few quotations from others, the mind of Camus—the object of greatest interest and importance—is only faintly revealed. This book will undoubtedly be a standard source for biographical information, but it does little to illuminate Camus's contribution to 20th-century thought.

And that contribution has been significant and problematical. To a bewildered generation disoriented by repeated destructive wars, the accelerated growth of mass society, unparalleled advances in technology, and a lack of common standards or agreed values, Camus's work provided an ethics, a kind of philosophical stance. His concept of the absurd offered a category in which logical, psychological, philosophical and even social and political difficulties could be encapsulated. It offered a rationale for enjoying life even in the presence of death. It was really neither a revolutionary nor a particularly moral message, but it was singularly attractive and exhilarating to a whole generation that was pleased to see it as revolutionary and moral. Here was an ethics based on revolt, not acquiescence; a hard ethics without transcendental illusions, yet imbued with compassion and aesthetic excitement and proffering the hope of humanitarian revival. Camus was considered a lay saint and a kind of cult was spawned by his work, specifically that of his early, absurd period.

He remains a darling of Liberal Culture, which views his work as a notable expression of the Western moral conscience. Dissenters in our society have sporadically hailed him, together with Herbert Marcuse, as one of their fore-runners. All of this says more about the superficial reading habits of many of Camus's admirers than it does about what Camus actually wrote.

Two basic intellectual concepts underlie Camus's writing: the absurd and revolt. The second is less understood than the first, but even the first is often imperfectly understood. Camus does not offer nihilism. He makes it clear in the preface to *The Myth of Sisyphus*, the book that spells out the theory of the absurd and describes the absurd man, that his commentary is provisional. To accept the absurdity of everything around us was for him a step, a necessary starting point. It must not become an impasse. Some of his imperceptive admirers fail to understand this. Ultimately, Camus asserts that life has value and meaning even when it appears most devoid of them, and he tries to repudiate the implications of his vision of the absurd. The problem is that he counters that vision, so forcefully portrayed in works like *The Stranger*, only with abstract arguments. And because he is intellectually honest and rigorous the arguments are not glib. Readers come from his books more impressed with the despair and nihilism than with the counterarguments. Even when his thinking passed beyond the absurd, he retained the negative cast of mind engendered by his encounter with it. The act of faith (in his case not faith in God) required to live and find happiness is rarely made convincing in his imaginative work. The absurd and its spirit of radical negation provide a temptation to which Liberal Culture is prone: to mistake intensity of sensation (a means of being confirmed in one's own existence) for the rhythm and warmth of life.

Lottman provides a clue for explaining why Camus is misinterpreted when he says, "an author's work is chronological. . . . The heart of an artist is a battlefield, his books being successive images of that battle." This notion, incidentally, was shared by Camus himself, who believed that a writer's individual works

are parts or stages of one intellectual and spiritual quest. A reader of Camus should balance his reading of *The Stranger* and *The Myth of Sisyphus* with a careful reading of *The Rebel*. This will help him perceive the chronological development of his thought.

In *The Rebel* the second basic concept is elaborated: revolt. Camus uses the word in a special way, not in the generally accepted sense. This can be misleading. When he speaks of revolt, he does not mean political revolution. Unlike the usual concept of revolution, his idea of revolt is centered on limitation, not absolutism; it preaches moderation, not extremism. In its social and political aspects it is a form of humility which recognizes that the fight against human suffering and injustice is inevitable and can have no end. The book provides a critique of the major revolutionary figures and movements of modern times, and is particularly critical of Marxism.

The criticism of the prophetic element in Marx and socialism is perhaps the most valid part of *The Rebel*. One critic refers to it as "one of the most trenchant critiques of communist thought and action ever written from the viewpoint of moral philosophy." Despite this critique, Camus's unrealistic conviction that the underdog is always right (a conviction shared by many of his epigones) caused him to hesitate in siding with Western capitalism even though he perceived the sins of communism. That hesitation disappeared after the Hungarian Revolution, which caused him to see clearly that tyranny was on the left and the Soviets and their Western advocates were the menace. He could be very harsh on the left, as in this statement from *Resistance, Rebellion and Death*:

"We must admit that today conformity is on the left. To be sure, the right is not brilliant. But the left is in complete decadence, a prisoner of words, caught in its own vocabulary, capable

merely of stereotyped replies, constantly at a loss when faced with the truth, from which it nevertheless claimed to derive its laws. The left is schizophrenic and needs doctoring through pitiless self-criticism, exercise of the heart, close reasoning and a little modesty."

But he could never fully disassociate himself from the left, probably because of the circumstances of his life, which Lottman recreates with such abundant detail—the time, the places, the influences exerted upon him at crucial stages in his development. Asked in the last year of his life if he was a "left-wing intellectual," he said he was not sure of being an intellectual but "I'm for the left, despite myself and despite it."

Despite this affinity for the left, much in Camus's work can be admired from other areas of the political spectrum, including the conservative. He displayed courage and honesty in his attempt to make sense of what appeared to him a senseless world. He fought a gallant (if at times naive) battle for reason, compromise, sanity and reverence for life in an absurd universe, in an absurd political situation. He was pagan rather than Christian, but he asked the right questions, the kind that constrain Christians to evolve ever more satisfactory answers for them. He distrusted abstraction and ideology. To no idea does he want man to abandon himself, for behind such commitment he sees lurking the spirit of extremism (compare Paul Elmer More's *Demon of the Absolute*). Against such rationalism he would pit tolerance, search and classical restraint. Camus's ideal man puts some distance between himself and his world, not in the neutral sense of Descartes and his successors, but in order never to forget in his state of involvement the limits placed upon man by nature. His concept of "moderation" expressed in *The Rebel* (and unfortunately never fully elucidated) is not dissimilar from the law of measure and the inner check advocated by Paul Elmer More and

Irving Babbitt.

When seen as a whole and with all of his writings taken into consideration, Camus's view of life does not differ in substance from the views of the classical humanists of the Graeco-Roman and European traditions. The values he unveils in his concept of revolt are borrowed from the Christian-humanitarian tradition. He believes that freedom is the highest value and tolerance the greatest virtue. He demands humanness and decency in politics. He gives the highest place to respect for life and happiness and denounces the senselessness of ambition and conquest. But he tried to establish such values without recourse to any form of transcendence. That such a thing can logically be accomplished is highly dubious. This leads us to consider the limits of his achievement.

Camus found that few can follow the absurdist logic to its final conclusions. Hope slips in, sometimes in disguise. He drew the wrong conclusions from this. He saw it as evidence of human weakness, a cowardly resorting to transcendence, the existence of which he firmly denied. Though he eschewed absolutes, his refusal to acknowledge the possibility of some kind of transcendence is absolute. Common sense and his knowledge of history, philosophy and human nature should have told him that the irradicable element of hope is evidence of something in man beyond naturalistic explanation. Notwithstanding his wariness toward rationalism dominating actual human experience, his own rationalism flies in the face of human experience attested to in all ages—in fact, in the face of his own experience. One of his friends wrote of him in a letter in 1936: "Camus continues to *think* despair, even to write it; but he *lives* hope."

He was determined to root his own ethics exclusively in experience. The trouble is that his concept of experience is too narrow. He once said, "I can feel

this heart inside me and I conclude that it exists. I can touch this world and I also conclude that it exists. All my knowledge ends at this point. The rest is hypothesis." Here is his principal limitation: an inability or refusal to test the hypothesis. Everything is at stake in that test because somewhere in the hypothesis is the only solid foundation for meaning and values. Ultimately, Camus unconsciously accepted a kind of transcendence. His attempt to derive values without it was a somewhat illicit intellectual operation performed to express a valid emotional experience. His method was imprecise and inconsistent. Lev Braun in *Witness of Decline* perceptively delineates the weakness when he says of Camus's philosophy: "We are faced with two sets of values, not altogether compatible and resting on shaky foundations: Christian ethics of brotherhood, but without God, and Greek ethics of measure and harmony but with no Unmoved Mover and cosmic rationality. Humanity strives for unity in both the Christian and pagan sense of the world, but Camus's humanism has neither roots nor teleology."

This lack has made his arguments mainly defensive in character, for they are concerned with protecting certain values against the extremes of nihilism. He emphasizes the will to be happy,

but his definition of happiness is negative, amounting to little more than successfully defying the absurd. Happiness should be the possibility of reaching something beyond the absurd—a use and justification for our freedom. It would seem necessary for happiness to put us in touch with some supreme force in order to be a positive and passionate affirmation. Camus's defensive position allows for wounds to be dressed and crimes to be understood and forgiven, but it is an ethics free of danger because it takes no risks. It is men who have taken risks (like having faith in the transcendent) who have provided us with examples and revelations. Camus seems to exchange risk for security, responsibility for peace.

Camus finally recognized the dangers of communism, but he made no strong, clear proposal for containing it. He pronounced the importance of freedom, justice and tolerance, but he did not instruct us how they can be safeguarded and extended in the modern industrial social system. He made clear the value of human communion, but he provided no positive basis for bringing those committed to shallow living and mass entertainment to a point where they can communicate first of all with themselves. □

read the article in *Commentary* because the latter's circulation is dwarfed by the *New York Times*. Thus, in Moscow some "Pravda people" do not know what foreign radios say because the sheer volume of Soviet media dominates their minds. Alternatively, Powers might have read the *Commentary* article, but he has screened this knowledge out of his consciousness as a priori wrong, or unimportant, or inimical.

I do not propose to establish whether Mr. Powers is a passive victim of, or an active believer in, the *New York Times*. The result in both cases is the same: his book is a *New York Times* item, blown up into a 393-page volume. As such, it elaborates at book length two dogmas of the *New York Times* about the CIA.

The CIA consists—or at least it did prior to the "New York Times revelations" of the mid-70's—of two basic components: covert operations, primarily attempting to prevent the Soviets from seizing nontotalitarian countries by their covert operations (e.g., the clandestine supply of money or weapons to a pro-Soviet group); and the gathering of intelligence data on totalitarian societies, above all the Soviet regime.

The CIA's covert operations can be rated from satisfactory to brilliant. An example of a brilliant operation was the CIA's aid to Guatemalan rebels in overthrowing pro-Soviet communists in 1954, with hardly a single person killed or wounded.

The CIA's gathering of intelligence data on Russia cannot be rated, for it does not exist as yet: true, the Soviet propaganda pamphlets which the CIA has been feeding to the Congress for the past 20 years as intelligence data have duly impressed many members of both houses, but they do not impress anyone who has read these Soviet propaganda pamphlets in the original.

The difference between these two components of the CIA's activity is understandable. In a country which has not yet become pro-Soviet totalitarian,

Double Destruction of the CIA

Thomas Powers: *The Man Who Kept the Secrets: Richard Helms and the CIA*; Alfred A. Knopf; New York.

by Lev Navrozov

Some Muscovites are called "Pravda people": they know nothing except *Pravda* and can think no thought unless *Pravda* has expressed it. By the

Lev Navrozov is a Russian scholar who emigrated to the United States.

same token, some New Yorkers may be called "New York Times people." Thomas Powers (a New Yorker) mentions in his book the "tiger cages" in South Vietnam among the "crimes and failures of the CIA." The magazine *Commentary* has demonstrated that the "tiger cages" were a malicious fraud or, at least, a publicity hoax of the mass media. But the *New York Times* has ignored the *Commentary* article. Therefore, Powers still believes in "tiger cages."

It is possible that Powers has never

Americans, well trained in ordinary American police techniques of detection, pursuit and fighting, feel at home. They prove to be more than a match for Soviet agents, though the latter are incomparably more numerous; American agents foil their Soviet counterparts effectively unless the president or Congress, prompted by the *New York Times*, ruins it all. On the other hand, the totalitarian Soviet regime is im-

Director of the CIA. He could not rebut a single point of the article. I thought this was fairly sensational, and the *New York Times* correspondent was present at the meeting. To be on the safe side, I sent the article to all the "top men" of the newspaper, and gave a copy personally to William Safire. Not a line in the *New York Times*. Three months after the publication of my article, Richard Nixon declared in Paris that

thing like John F. Kennedy) who stops this witch hunt and redbaiting. Yet, unable to see communists treated as full-fledged citizens with all the human rights to which they are entitled, the CIA overthrows (by criminal means) this tolerant democrat, who was presumably supported and loved by the majority of the population.

Actually, Arbenz never legalized the Communist Party. The latter had been legal long before he came to power, had completely controlled the trade unions, had practically ruled the country, and had brought the left-wing Marxist Arbenz to power, "his road cleared by the assassination of his chief rival." Naturally, the communists took over all the key posts in all the official agencies. Nor did Arbenz just "expropriate" some "idle banana plantation" of the United Fruit Company. He (that is, the communists) expropriated land belonging to Guatemalan farmers "in excess of a specified acreage," which was then to become the property of the State. The predictable result was a "class war," that is the liquidation of the "class enemy," which requires weapons—duly sent "from Czechoslovakia" (even Stalin always sent "Czech," not Soviet weapons). Arbenz was overthrown by Guatemalan rebels; whereupon he went to live in the Soviet empire—of course.

The CIA prevented a "Cuba" in Guatemala—at hardly any cost to taxpayers and without a single victim. Yet what contradicts a dogma of the *New York Times* cannot be true, so Powers invents instead a morality fable to fit the dogma.

Inversely, to collaborate Dogma No. 2 of the *New York Times*, viz., that the CIA is good at the gathering of intelligence data on Russia, Powers bursts into similar fireworks of lies aimed not at "exposing" the CIA, but at covering up its ineptitude and ignorance in this sphere. "On the whole," Powers boldly declares, "the CIA seems to have done its job (intelligence gathering) well, especially where Soviet military capabilities have been concerned." Did Richard

"... the best book on the CIA ever written."

—Books of the Times
New York Times

penetrable to U.S. intelligence, whether human or technical: it is *terra incognita* to them. The latter phrase is both cause and effect: the Soviet regime is impenetrable because it is *terra incognita*, and it is *terra incognita* because it is impenetrable.

The *New York Times* has turned reality upside-down. According to this cultural barony, or supermonopoly, which modestly calls itself the "premier newspaper of the United States," the CIA's covert operations are ineffective, harmful to the United States, immoral and criminal. It was at the insistence of the *New York Times* that Congress, prior to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, practically destroyed the CIA's covert operations, microscopic as its forces were when compared with Soviet global "special forces." Inversely, during the 70's the *New York Times* never published a line which would have exposed the CIA's ineptitude in gathering intelligence on Russia. Such a line would have shown that SALT is unverifiable, and the *New York Times* has always been for SALT. Surely the *New York Times* cannot publish news "fit to print," which shows that the *New York Times* has been wrong.

I found this out by an experiment. When my *Commentary* article "What the CIA Knows about Russia" had been reprinted or outlined by more than 500 periodicals, I was invited to discuss the article publicly with Admiral Turner,

the CIA had, for 11 years, grossly misled the U.S. government in regard to the Soviet arms build-up and growth (exactly what I had demonstrated in my article). Sensational? The *New York Times* published his speech, but neatly deleted just this statement. It was then that I realized that the *New York Times* represents a greater danger to the survival of the West than any other Western institution, including any Western Communist Party.

So, Dogma No. 1 of the *New York Times* that Powers elaborates in his book is the ineptitude, immorality, criminal content and harmfulness of the CIA's covert operations. For example, the CIA helped Guatemalan rebels to overthrow procommunist President Arbenz in 1954. Powers cannot deny that the CIA's operation was brilliant. Therefore, he argues that it was immoral, criminal, damaging to the United States:

"Arbenz... was guilty of the cardinal sins of legalizing the Guatemalan Communist Party and inviting it to join his government, and of expropriating nearly 400,000 acres of idle banana plantation owned by the United Fruit Company."

Do you see the picture? Prior to Arbenz the general attitude in Guatemala was something worse than McCarthyism; enter a tolerant democrat (some-

Nixon lie when he said exactly the opposite? Or does Richard Nixon exist only inasmuch as the *New York Times* chooses to reflect his existence?

One can easily believe the numerous descriptions by Powers of amicable relations between top CIA officials like Richard Helms and *New York Times* editors like James Reston, S. L. Sulzberger and Powers himself. These CIA officials ought to be pleased with the *New York Times* and Powers's book. It is true that the *New York Times* has been destroying the CIA at both ends: "exposing" its often brilliant covert operations and covering up its intelligence-data-gathering hoaxes. But the more inept a CIA official is, the more he must realize that without the *New York Times* cover-up of his ineptitude, he would have been fired years ago. With its double-barreled destruction of the effectiveness of the CIA, the *New York Times* and Powers have ensured his survival on the job. And isn't this what matters?

It is true that both dogmas mentioned previously could be disproved by Powers's own evidence. But dogmatists do not think. The world of dogmas and the world of facts never touch. Thus, every *Pravda* editorial could be slashed to ribbons by the evidence contained in *Pravda* itself. But why should *Pravda* people think?

Powers writes that Richard Nixon "complained about CIA failures to warn him of something in advance, saying that the Agency couldn't keep up even with the wire services." How to square this with the *New York Times*-Powers Dogma No. 2? Does Powers mean that he and the top *New York Times* editors can see the CIA's excellence at gathering intelligence data on totalitarian societies because they are good friends, while Richard Nixon is blinded by his hatred of the CIA? If this is the case, why have publications like *Village Voice* or *Rolling Stone* never reported that which Nixon complained of: the total ineptitude of the CIA in collecting data

on totalitarian societies?

The CIA "was never successful in penetrating Hanoi or the NLF with agents," writes Powers. "President Johnson once criticized John McCone [the CIA Director] for the CIA's failure in this regard . . ." Are we to conclude from this that the CIA could not penetrate the infrastructure of North Vietnam or its guerrilla troops in South Vietnam, but that it can penetrate Russia?

I cannot help recalling that Ronald Reagan's newsletter outlined my scathing exposé of the CIA's comical ignorance, and that the newspaper *Human Events* reprinted it in full, while it was rejected with horror by all those left-wing periodicals, authors and publishers—who are known for their exposés of the CIA's "violations of law and morality," and for divulging the names of CIA agents. It almost seems to be a colossal destruction of the CIA—by vigilant concealment of its ineptitude in intelligence data gathering and simultaneous praise of its imaginary talent, knowledge, skills and achievements in the same sphere.

In his introduction, Powers sings a hymn to the omniscience of the CIA with respect to the Soviet empire and its satrapies (such a hymn may also be called a Judas kiss). "Even the boldest Soviet initiative," Powers exclaims, "in the postwar period—Khrushchev's decision to put nuclear missiles into Cuba—was discovered in sufficiently good time to give Kennedy an opportunity to respond."

But from the text of Powers himself we can see what *really* happened. Late in July and early in August 1962, eight Soviet ships openly docked in Cuba, and a Soviet construction site with Soviet surface-to-air missiles was in plain sight, as American pilots could clearly see and photograph. Nothing was hidden or camouflaged, for Khrushchev assumed that it was his right to arm his ally, Cuba. Period.

On September 19, more than a month later, the CIA "concluded (without dis-

sent) that the Soviets were unlikely" to be building missile launches in plain sight. The CIA stuck to its guns; President Kennedy therefore denied publicly that the Soviets were placing nuclear missiles in Cuba. It took another month for the CIA to admit, on October 14, that the visible world was not a mirage. Surely the CIA's discovery belongs to the realm of philosophy, certainly not to intelligence.

It is clear from *The Man Who Kept the Secrets*, as from hundreds of other "CIA books," that the CIA has never been able to maintain a single agent within the Soviet infrastructure. By such an agent I mean a specific person who, unsuspected by the Soviets, has gained information from within the Soviet infrastructure, has returned safely to the West and written a book to prove his true identity. This is what hosts of Soviet agents in sensitive positions in the West, like Kim Philby, have done. In 1951 the CIA was requested, as Powers describes, to plant one agent in each Soviet airfield by July 1, 1952, about 2,000 agents in all. What was the CIA's reaction? "Sure, we can do that." They didn't. If this is the case, what is the worth of the CIA's declaration that it could verify SALT? "Sure, we can do that." Can you collect intelligence data confirming that the Soviet war machine will not try to conquer Eurasia and Africa within the next several years, thus sealing the doom of the United States too? "Sure, we can do that."

With rare exceptions, the "serious books" published in New York do not say anything except that their authors conform to this season's fashion. In 1975, a book like *The Man Who Kept the Secrets* would have been published by a small publishing house somewhere in Arlington, Virginia, and would have been hounded out of New York as an "antediluvian relic of the Cold War, McCarthyism and fascism." In 1979, the book was "just right" for New York.

Powers describes how Joseph McCarthy alluded, in his Wheeling speech, to

a CIA officer named Carmel Offie, and the man was fired from the CIA as a bad security risk. McCarthy made his cases "from FBI reports, the right-wing press, Washington rumor, the leaks of disappointed men, and pure innuendo." Even such a sedate statement would have been improbable in a book published in New York a few years ago. But in the very next paragraph Powers tells a good true story: that Carmel Offie got the "finest furs available," courtesy of the Soviet rulers, "by the *bale*" (the italics are Powers's). Does this mean that the Soviets love the CIA even more than the *New York Times*, and thus supply its officers with the finest furs available—by the *bale*? Surely by selling a *bale* of such furs the recipient can make hundreds of thousands of dollars. Even if Offie were not a bad security risk, all the same, is it proper for an American official to accept the finest furs—by the *bale*—from a powerful totalitarian, military, aggressive regime? Or does Powers imply that McCarthy was naive and unsuspecting when he merely *alluded* to Offie as a bad security risk? If only poor, simple-minded Joe had known this good true story as retold by Tom Powers in 1979!

The explanation is that New York fashion is changing. The book conforms. And no one can tell whether McCarthy is, according to Powers, a demon of persecution or an unsuspecting simpleton whose hair Powers could have raised with a good true story.

Otherwise, except for some irrelevant trivia about Helms, Powers's effort is merely a rehash of hundreds of previous books of the same kind. Richard Helms is simply a pretext for the author and the publisher to grind out another "CIA book" without communicating a single new fact, not to mention a concept.

Powers announces that the CIA file can "pop out the 1934 graduating class of Sverdlovsk High School at a moment's notice." Those who have read many "CIA books" will immediately realize that the sentence has been cop-

ied, word for word, from a previous "CIA book," and the author of that book had copied it from his predecessor. The CIA and "CIA books" have been stewing smugly in their own parochial juices for decades—wrapped in their own world of their own fictions copied from each other.

The CIA never knew that Egypt was preparing the Yom Kippur War until the newspapers reported the war itself, and the CIA assured the U.S. government that there was no movement capable of overthrowing the Shah in Iran—

when the movement had already come out into the open, and the Shah was all but overthrown. And some smart newsman once invented the "fact" that the CIA knows who was graduated from what high school in Sverdlovsk, and a succession of "CIA authors" have been copying this musty nonsense ever since.

What an insulated, stale, provincial world. Will Americans break out of it, or will the mass media keep them in until the D-day of American surrender? □

The Scavenger's Novel

Norman Mailer: *The Executioner's Song*; Little, Brown & Co.; New York.

by Edward J. Walsh

On April 1976, Gary Gilmore was released from prison in Marion, Illinois. Nine months later, he was executed at the Utah State Prison, having chosen not to appeal the death sentence imposed for the murders of two men he had never met. Of his thirty-five years, more than half were spent behind bars. His life, had he never committed murder, could most gently be described as subhuman. Yet he is chosen for near-sainthood by Norman Mailer.

Mailer's latest reinforces his standing in the world of contemporary culture in the eyes of two groups: those who are fascinated by people like Gary Gilmore, and those who are not. To the former, Mailer's work is an occasion for celebration: *The Executioner's Song* has been hailed by everyone from *Time* to the *New York Times* reviewer, to Joan Didion. But to the second group, which presumably includes the 71 percent of the American people who believed Gilmore deserved to be executed,

Mr. Walsh is a frequent contributor to these pages.

Mailer's book is a sordid echo of endless tape recordings, newspaper clips and half-literate third-hand recollections; juxtaposed with leachings of Mailer's imagination at its most prurient, and his taste at its crudest, for nearly 1100 pages.

Now, Mailer has been around a long time, and *The Executioner's Song* offers little that has not been seen in his past productions. But this book will stand for a long time as a case study in pseudo-journalistic pornography. Technically, it is just that; even reviewers who coughed up the adulation that is added automatically, like salad dressing, to anything from Mailer's cultural ghetto fussed a bit about the tape recorder as Primary Source. For this book is the product of a lazy man with a dirty mind, who now relies solely on crudity and contacts with others like himself to get his books written. "I'm all diarrhea," says main source Larry Schiller, the seeker after epitaphs of such notables as Susan Atkins, Jack Ruby and Mrs. Lenny Bruce.

Mailer begins with the assumption that the thoughts and writings of a minor criminal are touchstones of contemporary American life. To give us the epic scope he feels is called for, he tells the story of Gilmore's entire life, and the lives of dozens of people who came

in contact with him after his release from prison until his death: family, a girl friend, his two victims, lawyers, policemen, public defenders, fellow prisoners, and of course reporters and hucksters of book and movie contracts. It is all there, unedited, we know, because the legend on the dust cover tells us that:

"Norman Mailer has not predigested his material and imposed a point of view. The effect is astonishing: the work avoids the set and settled quality of history; it has instead the vitality of imagination, evoking from the reader a sense of participation and the excitement and dread of the events in a wonderful narrative that one cannot stop reading . . ."

We suspect instead that Mailer was very close to his deadline for a very fat book. So rather than "predigesting" the con-

"A masterpiece, the perfect and awesomely executed parable . . . a narrative technique of real genius . . . a brilliant, maybe a great, novel . . ."

— *The New Republic*

tent of the tapes and newspaper clippings, he hurls it all at the reader, spliced together with his own sentences:

"She sat there with her anger pushed in like a spring. Dead and wet, he was going to give it a go. Don't start what you can't finish, she told him. Be straight."

How does one "push" anger? But let that pass, it is but a tiny gleaning of the semiliterate prose that Mailer considers sufficient to tell the story of how Gary Gilmore shot two men to death, was himself condemned to die, and was then purified by the process. *The Executioner's Song* is not only a ghoulish peek at a legal execution; it is the text of how a murderer metamorphosed into a martyr, beatified, almost, in the eyes of media groupies like Mailer, for his willingness to sell his sleazy story to whichever of them promised to pay off his family and creditors.

It cannot be denied that the Gilmore case raised important questions for jurists. How seriously can a condemned man's refusal to appeal the death sentence be taken, particularly when statutes provide for automatic appeal in capital cases? The death penalty ought not to be administered too readily. Some of those who protested Gilmore's execution did so with such questions in mind. But they were joined by many who nursed an ideology that demands compassion for unrepentant killers, but is indifferent to the families of the victims. Both of Gilmore's victims were young men with wives and children. As soon as his deeds are done, the families practically disappear from the book.

The Executioner's Song is not so much about criminal law or even Gary Gilmore; Norman Mailer does not deal in such banalities. It is about inverted

values and tastes, by which a murderer is argued to be "strong," "cool," "tough" and at the same time a sensitive artist. The "love story" of Gilmore and his severely disturbed girl friend, we're told, survives.

These were things casually observed by reasonable people: the strict Mormon attorneys who took Gilmore's case, prison personnel and the district attorney who prosecuted him. As such they were asides, incidental to the real Gary Gilmore, a savage, remorseless killer. But these irrelevancies are what Norman Mailer fixes on in his search for "human interest" in Gilmore, a man we come to know, as the dust cover suggests, "intimately."

Such a search as Mailer's was undertaken by scores of newspaper and television reporters, book publishers and movie producers. Mailer's book is but another product of Gilmore's contrived media appeal. The principal character is not really Gilmore, but Larry Schiller,

obsessed with excrement, who appears in the book somewhere near the chapter entitled "Exclusive Rights," and records the interminable conversations that he eventually sells for hundreds of thousands of dollars to the likes of Mailer, who in turn sells them as *The Executioner's Song*. The unfailing availability of Schiller's tape recorder near his cell awakened in Gilmore the urge to hold forth on the not-very-interesting subjects of his psyche and his philosophy of life, which Schiller is convinced the world awaits.

Mailer's intent in his exhaustive cataloguing of the minutiae of every life touched by Gilmore is to persuade us that his crimes were the result of a coherent chain of circumstances over which he had no power: that Nicole Baker's nymphomania drove him into a frenzy of jealousy; or because Provo, Utah is a dreary, windswept nowhere, crime was the only outlet for his brooding, volcanic personality. In short, that there were *reasons* Gary Gilmore killed. The very ordinary people who surrounded him formed a stultifying little world, ". . . a view of America that is seldom seen—the moneyless side of the modern West, with its pickup trucks, its trailer camps, its petty crime, and its county jails." This is what Mailer finds in Utah—a long way from Manhattan, where one can surely understand how an intelligent, artistic soul like Gilmore would be driven to murder. It is the same old argument—actually more of a subtle hint, limned with liberal regret—that one's environment is responsible for one's actions, and, therefore, Gary Gilmore should not be punished but *understood*. His demand to die added the final titillating aspect to the voyeuristic attraction of Gilmore, a man who trampled on society's most sacred norms, for Mailer and Schiller, who express no allegiance to those norms themselves.

What, then, are the impressions one retains of *The Executioner's Song*? First and foremost, that civilized values

are secondary, no, unimportant, even meaningless, in the process of creating a media superstar. Gary Gilmore was good "copy"; he was not some deranged hillbilly or ghetto hit man, but a calculating, reasonably intelligent man who turned his life consciously to the pursuit of evil: "I walked in on Benny Bushnell and I said to that fat son of a bitch, 'Your money, son, *and* your life.'" That he was a killer rather than a rock-music idol or a producer of pornographic films was only a difference of style. He had done things no other media star of Larry Schiller's and Mailer's pedigree had. He belonged to a world of brutal violence and animal cunning, but he was at the same time totally at ease in *their* world: cool, chatty, well-read, and most of all, contemptuous of the stodgy, unfashionable civil authorities, as personified by Warden Sam Smith and the stiff-lipped Mormon community. In a sense, then, Gilmore was like *them*, and much was said and done in the name of journalism to bring him closer into the fold of raffish bizzaros who roost in New York, like Mailer, and Los Angeles, like Schiller.

Second, that Norman Mailer, a writer of dubious gifts, can find a publisher even today, when the industry is tight, for a volume of boring paragraphs separated by big white spaces intended to make it longer. There seems to be an intractable audience for such slipping writers on both coasts of the United States, who care not a whit about the quotations or the fate of Gary Gilmore, but yearn to protect their standing in the claue of literati who still think of Mailer as the relentless exposé of the quaintness of American institutions.

The Executioner's Song, then, is both witness and exhibit. Mailer, through his tapes and clippings, details the press's disgusting pursuit of every pointless fact, every tasteless anecdote, in the progression towards Gilmore's end. The night before the execution, while attorneys of the American Civil Liberties Union fought a last losing

battle in the U.S. Supreme Court for a stay of execution (denied even by Justices Marshall and Brennan), the press were getting drunk in their cars and radio vans outside the prison. The beneficiary of all this vulturelike circling of the corpse, with Geraldo Rivera of ABC screaming at the producers of *Good Morning America* to cut the Rona Barrett segment, was Norman Mailer, bailed out again, presumably at the last

moment, from another lawsuit or overdue alimony payment. Because his view of the writer as voyeur and his aberrant regard for the ethical guideposts of American life are intrinsic to his treatment of the life and crimes of Gary Gilmore, the book is an indictment of both Mailer and his publisher—and will, one fondly hopes, serve to isolate him and his avid readers from the genuinely critical literary currents of America. □

Rethinking Linguistics and Liberalism

Geoffrey Sampson: *Liberty and Language*; Oxford University Press; New York.

by Gordon M. Pradl

That government which governs *best*, governs *least*, because paradoxically it allows its citizens the *most* opportunity to govern their own economic affairs and thus to reap the ensuing benefits. Such heterodoxy is seldom voiced today, especially in academic circles, ruled as we are by the arrogant authority of the "expert" who would increasingly plan our lives away. In light of this it is particularly refreshing to come across a book that makes a strong case for the old-style liberalism that we will need to reassert if all our freedom is not to trickle away to Washington.

Geoffrey Sampson's argument is based on his reassessment of the work of Noam Chomsky, the MIT linguist whose insights regarding the nature of language have led him to attack American foreign and domestic policy from the philosophical vantage point of his own particular brand of socialism. Focusing on Chomsky's misappropriation of the terms *creativity* and *free-*

dom, Sampson traces the roots of the empiricist-rationalist quarrel in order to demonstrate that liberalism, not socialism, is the best political arrangement for guaranteeing our continued economic and social progress. Yet although he is dealing with weighty and abstract concepts, Sampson, himself a professor of linguistics at the University of Lancaster in Great Britain, has consciously written with the layman in mind. Thus he has kept technical jargon, both linguistic and political, to a minimum, making the material entirely accessible. And what a pleasure to find a linguist with a sense of style: fluent, forceful and concrete, yet spiced with irony and wit.

Sampson begins by giving due recognition to Chomsky's intellectual achievement, one which has revolutionized the way we now describe human language. Chomsky's claim is that actual human languages are clearly less diverse than one would logically expect. In other words what is surprising about natural languages is *not* how different they are, but how similar they turn out to be on closer inspection. This similarity across languages has been expressed through the concept of linguistic universals, namely those principles that operate at the level of syntax to strictly govern how many words may be combined in order to form acceptable or

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grammatical sentences.

An example of such a universal would be the fact that sentences in all languages are hierarchically rather than linearly organized. Because of this property or "constraint" the words of a sentence are analyzable into groups of nested units, which in turn may be represented by a system of constituent brackets. Thus (ignoring most of the details) the sentence *The argument for liberalism that Sampson offers in his book in large part originated in Popper's notion of fallibilism* would be analyzed as follows:

[[The argument [for liberalism]] [that
Prep P NP

Sampson offers in his book]] [[in large
Rel NP

part] [originated] [in Popper's notion] [of
adv v
fallibilism]]]

Prep P Prep P VP

(where Prep P=prepositional phrase,
NP=nominal phrase, Rel=relative
clause, adv=adverb, v=verb, VP=
verb phrase).

As you peel away the brackets like the layers of an onion the highest level constituents that remain are: (the argument) (originated) (in Popper's notion) or (argument) (originated) (notion). The other words in the original sentence function as modifiers, but their location in the sentence is controlled by the hierarchical relation among the three highest elements.

This hierarchical characteristic of language is revealed even more dramatically when we consider how questions are related back to their corresponding statements. Logically one of the infinite ways a language might form questions is by reversing the order of words in statements. Thus *anarcho-syndicalism of proponent a is Chomsky* would be the question corresponding to *Chomsky is a proponent of anarcho-syndicalism*. Yet no human languages have been discovered that work this way;

rather, the word that is moved to form the appropriate question (the verb *is* in this case) is always chosen on the basis of its position in the hierarchical structure of the original sentence.

Such manipulation games might appear to be merely some arcane whimsy cooked up by practicing linguists; yet they do point to a fundamental conclusion: the human brain must, in fact, be specifically wired for language. This

"In this very distasteful book Sampson . . . critiques the kind of political views found in Noam Chomsky's writings . . . Misreadings of Chomsky's linguistics abound."

—*Library Journal*

means that traditional empiricist views of language do not stand up because the child does not come to the language-learning situation as a blank slate, but rather brings a brain with distinct linguistic mappings or predispositions. What Chomsky makes of this conclusion, however, is not logically supported by the facts—as Sampson in the remainder of his book makes manifestly clear.

Chomsky's advocacy of the strong nativist position regarding language acquisition gets him into a number of logical difficulties which begin with his peculiar notion of creativity. Language, he maintains, represents a primary form of creative behavior because although language contains an infinite set of possible sentences, these sentences are generated using only a finite set of rules (the finite grammar that exists in our heads). This grammar allows us to "create" and understand new sentences, sentences which have never been previously uttered. But, as Sampson demonstrates, this is an impoverished view of creativity because it operates only at the level of form or syntax. True creativity, Sampson argues, involves producing "something which falls outside the class implied by any set of principles that might have been proposed to account for previous examples." And thus in this sense uttering new sentences would *not* be a creative activity.

Linguistic creativity, however, does occur in the realm of semantics for it is in terms of meaning that we truly make the world anew. As Sampson explains, the power of the human mind is revealed in sentences like "Horseless carriages travel rapidly," a nonsensical utterance in 1700. Because we have changed the material condition of our lives, such a sentence is now possible even though our syntax—the medium

through which our meanings are conveyed—has basically remained the same.

By ignoring the semantic basis of creativity Chomsky comes to hold a concept of mind which, because of its strong antiempiricist bias, leads him in the direction of an authoritarian political philosophy. This philosophy involves a definition of *freedom* in which the individual's economic destiny is determined by collective planning. Thus from the linguistic sphere through the political-economic sphere Chomsky would have our behavior governed on the basis of natural but fixed rules.

Sampson, on the other hand, counters with Karl Popper's concept of fallibilism, which emphasizes the incurable ignorance of man as a corollary to his creative capacity. If life is an ongoing experiment (as empiricist methodology suggests), then it is impossible to know the outcome of our inventions in advance. This being the case, we need the sorting device of free competition to see which ideas and goods survive, and this is only possible in those societies founded on liberal principles. It is in such societies that people will stake something of value to see if novelty will succeed. Thus there will be winners and losers, but the interests of the losers are also served due to the general upward spiral. This in contrast to the efforts of salaried civil servants, who, as Sampson reminds us, "cannot advance us economically, since they have nothing to

gain and everything to lose by innovating."

During the course of his thorough demolition of Chomsky's position, Sampson reinterprets a number of issues through his liberal lens. The war in Vietnam, for example, is colored differently when the authoritarian nature of the opposing government is taken into consideration. Similarly, Britain's membership in the European Economic Community becomes a regressive act and the whole Jensen I.Q. controversy an unnecessary occurrence—all because collectivism and predetermined regulations won out over ongoing individual risk and responsibility. Yet liberal and empiricist that he is, Sampson is quick to separate himself from behaviorist quacks such as B. F. Skinner who, he shows, have created a theory of mind out of empiricism when properly empiricism should be no more than a method which holds that our theories of the world must be based on "observation,"

not "introspection."

Sampson's sketch does not, of course, address all the possible objections to the liberal position. There is, for instance, no attempt to consider the very real underlying tension in our lives between risk and security. We may wish to take chances, but simultaneously we yearn for control and predictability. Furthermore, economic machinery is continually created that seeks to extort justification for its ongoing existence through the manipulation of taste and the manufacture of needs long after its original purposes have been served. Still, these are complications for another treatise. At the moment we must be thankful to Professor Sampson for having demonstrated convincingly the serious error of Chomsky's connection between linguistic theory and political practice, and for having offered a description of liberalism that just might gain some new converts among those who can be persuaded to read it. □

The Thin (Liberal) Man

Richard Harris: *Enemies, A Novel*;
Richard Marek Publishers; New York.

by Otto J. Scott

John Flood, a heavy-drinking, small-town newspaper columnist, was picked up outside a bar one night by an attractive woman. He awoke the next morning in an alley, to discover her nearby corpse. She had been raped and murdered. In a novel, that introduction would lead the reader toward the realistic conclusion that Flood had committed an atrocious crime. The flat, police-blotter description of what Flood saw—and did *not* feel—however, makes it clear at the outset that *Enemies*,

Otto Scott's latest book is *The Secret Six: John Brown and the Abolitionist Movement*.

despite its subtitle, is *not* a novel, but a mystery.

The distinction is well known; bookstores put up separate shelves. Readers have grown to know and expect the difference, as both publishers and authors well know. Mystery buffs, reading of Flood's awakening, will not be deceived for a second. They will *know* that the hero has been set up; that is a conventional opening gambit in a comfortingly familiar genre. They will be unsurprised when, with remarkable sang-froid, Flood discovers the murdered woman's bikini panties in his pocket—and uses them to wipe off the handle of the knife protruding from her cadaver. He then removes a small billfold from under her shoulder, starts to walk away—and returns. One hand is clenched; Flood decided that was significant. Kneeling, he pried that hand open and saw several tiny strands of his own prematurely

white hair. He removed these, and then "searched around the body, his face close to the ground . . ." Thinking of this bloodhound act, he straightened up, and his keen eyes saw a small bottle in the gutter. Although alley gutters are usually cluttered, Flood sensed significance in this vial, and searched till he found its screw top, which was—typical of the genre—imbedded in a pool of dried vomit. Pocketing both the bottle and the cap, this presumably normal, middle-class New Englander then, at last, took his leave of the grisly scene, having miraculously escaped notice by the early morning crowds.

This is only the opening scene. It is plain the reader will be asked to accept a series of incredibilities, and is not expected to know much about the world. The hero gets back to his apartment—unseen, of course—and settles down to pound out his regular column. It consists of a recollected episode from his time as a correspondent in the U.S.S.R. in which he befriended a waif, defied a Soviet court and comported himself like a journalistic John Wayne. Clues as large as horses are paraded past the reader, to underline the point that the hero is a Good Guy.

Mystery fans, whose ranks include everyone ever trapped in an airplane seat next to a computer expert who loves his work, will immediately recognize all these moves, from the opening line. Mr. Flood is going to solve the mystery of the murder in the alley before the police make the mistake of arresting and blaming *him*.

While writing his remarkable newspaper column, Flood, by a prodigious exercise of will power, forces his memory to disgorge the details of the preceding night. This feat, which may astonish physicians acquainted with alcoholic amnesiacs and persons who have been drugged, reveals to the reader that Flood went to bed with his pickup, who was—before pausing for this encounter—leaving town. She gave him a letter to give her sister, whom she was leaving behind. The sister is a ballet

teacher. But before looking for her, Flood recalls where the letter was concealed in his apartment, opens it and reads it. It is in Russian, but that is no problem: one year's residence and a previous year of study had made him fluent in that language. The letter speaks of a vast, secret, anti-American undertaking launched inside the USA by sinister Soviet forces. Anything less would, of course, have been a distinct letdown. The letter also spoke of a husband named Bruce and of mysterious coat hooks in Bruce's room.

Ordinarily these details could be skipped in a synopsis, but Richard Harris is no ordinary thriller author. He is described on the dust jacket as having "written extensively on law and politics for *The New Yorker* for the past fifteen years, and has been known as one of the most thoughtful and courageous political journalists of our time."

This background and introduction give rise to high hopes, and certainly entitles the author to a full reading. Surely there is more here than meets the eye; certainly an expert on law and politics known for his courage has insights denied the average, and a tale to tell that will rivet us to our chairs, and render us still and thoughtful.

Flood, meanwhile, has moved into action. He traces the sister at her ballet school and tells her that her sister has been murdered. That does not send Marja into hysterics: she is hardly surprised. She does not suspect Flood for a moment, though she had never before known of his existence. She immediately agrees to help him search for and discover the real villains before the police blunder in and spoil everything.

Having found a beautiful woman to assist his search, Flood has a final scene with his remarkably loathsome city editor, then drives out of the city to a motel. Not long afterward he is joined by Marja—the dead woman's sister—who is not Russian, but Yugoslavian. The author catches himself at this point, and finally—one almost says mercifully

—introduces a digression to explain the Danube Swabians. Marja's brother-in-law, although named Bruce McCabe in the U.S. and bearing "all the typical mannerisms of the proper Englishman" (whatever that means), is really a Prussian named Emil von Hoffen. This changeling, now revealed as a nazi under his tweedy disguises, operates a flag and flagpole factory.

Flood, no fool, immediately senses a hidden significance in this enterprise. To discover its essence, he determines to burglarize the factory, using Marja's keys. Meanwhile, she draws an architectural plan of the building in a few fast, fluid strokes, revealing yet another of her multiple talents. Once inside the factory, Flood discovers that the round balls designed to fit atop the flagpoles

are not conventionally hollow. Eagles, ordinarily decorative, are made dangerous by concealed short-wave radio receivers. A black box contains a transmitter. A chart of the factory installations shows they are located at defense establishments, government buildings and even the White House. Aha!

Back at the motel, Flood ignores a lovesick chambermaid, reads in the paper that the woman in the alley has been discovered, rents a car and makes various moves designed to throw the police off his trail. These consist of dying his spectacular prematurely white hair and giving a false name. He dictates his activities to a tape recorder, has another rendezvous with Marja and determines to burglarize the McCabe-von Hoffen house to discover what

In the forthcoming issue of *Chronicles of Culture*:

On Patriotism

"In a letter to a close friend, she [Flannery O'Connor] describes herself seated, 'expressionless as a clock' and with nothing to say, at a table of 'College Liberals.' She had no affinity for that group, nor for the Greenwich Village crowd, nor for the San Francisco writers, nor for the disciples of existentialism. In a secular age she occupied herself with the sacred. In an age of leniency she insisted on judgment. In a society of casual believers or confirmed unbelievers she dealt rigorously with the hard questions of belief. In a time of experimental fiction she fruitfully used traditional narrative methods."

from "Letters from Andalusia"
by Stephen L. Tanner

Also:

Opinions & Views—Commendables—In Focus
Waste of Money—The American Proscenium
Stage—Screen—Music—Correspondence
Liberal Culture—Journalism
Polemics & Exchanges

further mysteries it contains. Marja obligingly draws another architectural map, skillfully locating the burglar alarm system, the guard—a dog—and von Hoffen's assistant. None of these faze Flood, who breaks into the garage behind the house, which is unaccountably left with no alarm system or dog, and sets fire to McCabe-von Hoffen's Mercedes. The blaze brings the human and animal security guards racing out of the house which Flood then enters. He disconnects the burglar alarm system and ascends to the attic, where he twists the coat hooks to reveal a hidden room behind some wall panels. Once inside, he finds a new Dart missile aimed menacingly at the ceiling, which is equipped with a movable panel. The flagpole knobs, the eagles, all now assume their complete menace: the U.S.S.R. has missiles pointed at each flagpole and/or eagle, plus a system to activate these within *two minutes*. The nation is doomed, but Flood will, somehow, save us all.

It would be fascinating to describe how this fictional journalist manages to leave the McCabe-von Hoffen house, pick up the plump, lovesick chambermaid, fight his way free of the pursuing security guard and dog, and manages to get to Central Park and hold another rendezvous with Marja. In fact, he manages to take Marja away from New York, though the newspapers now have him as a murder suspect. They travel in nearly leisurely fashion toward Washington, D.C., pausing only to make repeated love and to kill one pursuer. As usual, nobody sees this, though the man is hurled off the deck of a ferry and falls into the suction of the propeller, and turns the water to "a frothy pink."

In the nation's capital, Flood manages to see a U.S. senator from his state whom he knows of old, though they had been long estranged. The senator, convinced of Flood's innocence and the truth of his tale, arranges a late-night interview for him with the *President of the United States*.

Mr. Harris's fictional president is a novelty amid all these stereotypes and clichés of the genre he has chosen. For one thing, the president's name is Gilfedders and he speaks with a burr, having been raised in Scotland. He is parsimonious, as befits a cultural Scotsman running the USA, and retires each night at ten o'clock, precisely. He also drinks his whiskey neat, as—of course—does the hero. They hit it off at once; the president believes Flood's tale because he must: otherwise the book would end in a most dismaying fashion.

The president, in this final section, calls a top-level conference. Flood is conducted, via elevators and past successive steel doors and grim guards with machine guns, down to the vast underground bunker that lies beneath the White House: installed during Truman's time. This layout resembles Hitler's famed and often-described retreat beneath the Berlin chancellery, without the homey touches and comforts of that lair. Intercoms speak, and the decor is distinctly penitentiary gray.

The conference room, when Flood finally reaches it, is similarly dismal, and is first swept with "long-handled electronic devices like small vacuum cleaners." Harris is not strong on technology. The men enter, presumably holding the highest positions in the land, exchanging dirty jokes. The participants react to Flood's tale along lines that resemble a Queens bar clientele: with obscenities and puzzlement. After several such sessions, Flood's story is checked and its veracity accepted. Then Flood realizes that he is "*more than their equal*."

Meanwhile, Flood has come to realize that "it wasn't only the Russians or the Chinese who threatened the survival of the race, it was *all* the leaders of the world. *They* were the enemies . . ." Meanwhile, he argues with the top-level officials. Asked to leave, he refuses and argues them out of it. The president is "obviously impressed by Flood's audacity." In response, Flood is impressed by the president's "unerring

sense of manipulation." Meanwhile he sizes up the others, decides the chief of staff was chosen for his stupidity, "to make sure the military would be ineffective" in the nation.

After several such "conferences" in which the reader is invited to achieve contempt for the leaders of the U.S., Flood holds an intimate chat with the president in the Lincoln Room, and is then returned to the bunker. A friendly CIA man has breakfast with him on the final day, and tells him nothing will be done; the missiles are defensive, and the Cold War will continue. Flood is angered by this, and determines that he will tell the people. Then, en route to what he expects is another chat with the president, he is shot in the back of the head. In the final instant—"He realized that from the beginning he had known the end."

* * *

Such is the story line of Richard Harris's "novel." It is detailed in its denouncement because it is an excellent example of the modern American penny dreadful, a twisted, suicidal inversion of the old formula of good versus evil—in which good was expected to win out—into a formula where whatever is American is filthy and debased, twisted and false, where all the persons are equally degraded, and where the ending seems designed to turn the stomach of the reader. It is obvious that to follow such twistings is not, in itself, either a pleasant or worthy undertaking. There has to be a larger reason for such attention—and there is. Mr. Harris's glittering journalistic credentials entitled him to a full hearing in his venture into fictional creativity. His background as a presumed expert on American law and politics promised portraits of realistic leaders and of the remarkable suppleness, the compassion and the protection of individual rights that make the American criminal the most protected species of wild animal in the world. Beyond that, there is an ob-

servation made by W. Somerset Maugham, whose truth every real writer knows:

"Sometimes people carry to such perfection the mask they have assumed that in due course they actually become the person they seem. But in his book or his picture the real man delivers himself defenseless. To the

acute observer no one can produce the most casual work without disclosing the innermost secrets of his soul."

Mr. Harris's novelistic venture seems to embody this truism, revealing his hatred of this land, its people and their institutions—and his own stature beyond the ability of anyone else to describe. □

As Secret as Christmas Day

Peter Wyden: *Bay of Pigs*; Simon & Schuster; New York.

by Alan J. Levine

The Bay of Pigs was perhaps the most humiliating Cold War reverse suffered by the United States until the Indochina War. Like most national defeats, it became a rich source of double talk and scapegoating. Despite a few questionable conclusions, Peter Wyden has done a lot to clear the air and show what happened, and why the attempt to free Cuba failed. Unlike most writers on this subject, Wyden has not made either the CIA or President Kennedy a scapegoat, though neither the CIA nor Kennedy partisans will find much to rejoice about. There is plenty of blame for everyone in the American government, he claims, and only the Cuban exiles emerge with their honor unblemished.

The CIA was largely uncontrolled, not in the sense that it disobeyed higher authority, but because nobody bothered to supervise it. Nor did the CIA make more than grudging attempts at coordination with other departments of the government. Even the CIA's activities were to a remarkable extent the efforts of one man, Richard Bissell, "Deputy Director for Plans," in plain English—the head of covert operations. To the

Mr. Levine is a historian who lives in New York.

extent that there was an overall plan for the Cuban invasion, it existed in Bissell's head. He alone made the crucial decision to change the anti-Castro campaign from a guerrilla effort to an invasion.

The Americans held tenaciously to two propositions. First, that the Cuban people would rise in the event of an exile invasion. Second, that secrecy about the United States' involvement could be maintained not only before the invasion, but *after* it. This was a truly bizarre idea, since thousands of people were continuously involved in the invasion preparations, which took place mostly outside the United States. The invasion force was to be escorted by American ships (some genius decided that painting out the ships' numbers would disguise them), while actually a U.S. Navy vessel took the exiles' landing craft into battle. The fact that the United States was training a Cuban exile force became public in late 1960; as a participant commented, it was "as secret as Christmas Day." Yet, right through the invasion, the CIA and the White House continued to imagine that permanent secrecy about our role could be maintained, though the Cuban exile leader, Miro Cordona, and U.S. Information Agency Director, Edward R. Murrow, warned that this was impossible. The administration's attitude can be characterized only as willful blindness. In this atmosphere, it is understandable that the CIA seriously considered slipping Castro

a box of cigars contaminated with a chemical that would make him appear "disoriented" on television. Apparently, it did not occur to anyone that the victims of one of his marathon speeches might find it hard to tell the difference between Castro sober and Castro disoriented.

The CIA's conviction that the Cuban people would rise against Castro was admittedly prompted by the understandably eager exiles. But it was contradicted by some of the agency's own estimates, and information supplied by our allies. Yet neither the Pentagon nor the White House seems to have bothered to seek an informed, independent appraisal of this crucial premise. Both shared the belief in an uprising. (To be fair, the Pentagon disclaimed knowledge of the political factors involved, and was rather dubious about the operation.) Whether the CIA was wrong about the attitudes of the Cubans is not certain even yet—if only because it completely bungled the liaison with its own men and the underground in Cuba, allowing Castro to round up supporters and smash his opposition. But to depend on a very small invasion force being supplemented by an uprising against a fairly well-armed regime seems rather reckless.

As Wyden shows, even the military preparations were sadly fumbled. The plan took final form only a month or so before the invasion; the Bay of Pigs was selected as the target quite late. All sorts of mistakes were made; the CIA did not even bother to try out some equipment beforehand. It reluctantly agreed to mount anti-aircraft guns on the ships and landing craft only at the insistence of the Cuban exiles. When the Pentagon sent a Marine logistics specialist to inspect the CIA's preparations, the agency ignored his advice. Some of the officers the CIA itself picked to train the Cubans treated the exiles as "greasers." Nor did the CIA make all the relevant information available to President Kennedy. He was led to suppose that if the invasion failed the men could join up with anti-Castro guer-

rillas in the mountains. This was impossible. Nevertheless, Wyden believes, the operation was not completely hopeless. It was a "wild gamble," but not "mad," and with all its defects the plan might have been carried out successfully.

President Kennedy wrecked any chances of success by blandly ignoring the requirement—which the CIA seems to have made reasonably clear—for the destruction of Castro's air force. The Pentagon had warned at one point that if even one enemy plane survived it could sink most of the invasion ships. The CIA had planned two air strikes, one two days before D-day and one at the last minute. In the naive hope of concealing the size and origin of the operation, the president cut the first attack from sixteen planes to six, and canceled the second strike entirely. Castro's surviving aircraft played a decisive role, sinking critical supplies and shooting down the Cuban exile bombers. The Cuban exiles fought well and valiantly; they were simply isolated and outnumbered. It is perhaps characteristic of the Bay of Pigs that President Kennedy was even more enthusiastic about the dishonest aspects of the operation than the CIA—and it was the fraud involved which finally wrecked the whole affair.

The planning and failure of the Bay of Pigs, and the CIA's vaguely related attempts to murder Castro are well told by Wyden, who managed to secure a good deal of new information from both American and Cuban sources. His conclusions are well argued, and his criticisms of President Kennedy and Richard Bissell, the prime decision-makers, are particularly impressive, given his obvious respect for both men. His book is far from an anti-CIA diatribe, and he appreciates the way the world looked to those in charge in 1961, which is more than can be said of many recent historians.

In one case, however, Wyden does indulge in some unfortunate sensationalism. American destroyers trying to rescue survivors after the defeat were

shot at; Wyden suggests that had the Cubans or Americans on the spot been more reckless, "World War III" might have been started. Since incidents between American and Soviet forces have occurred several times without serious consequences, it is hard to believe that an American-Cuban clash would have had such horrible results.

A more important defect is Wyden's failure to discuss the issue of the morality of the operation in a serious manner. He merely offers, as an aside, the comment that the American leaders' "urge to eliminate Castro, while ethically indefensible, is easy to understand." Not coincidentally, he also fails to discuss the consequences of the Castro regime's survival. A brief account of what Castro has done to his own country, his interference in other Latin American countries and Africa, and the 1962 missile crisis, might suggest a different conclusion about the morality—though surely not the effectiveness—of the Bay

of Pigs. While intervention in other countries, whether overt or covert, is hardly an ideal solution for problems, it is sometimes necessary. Castro, after all, was already quietly intervening to aid communists in other Latin American nations. The Bay of Pigs was just an attempt to do to Castro, wholesale, what Castro was already doing to his neighbors, retail. In terms of global strategy his regime was a Soviet salient inside the United States' innermost defense perimeter. To declare any American intervention wrong, as Wyden seems to imply, really means to allow the other side a free hand to continue its interventions as it pleases. It is unfortunate that our government could not find a more effective and open means of dealing with Castro. But if its actions were immoral, they were only because of the futile dishonesty—as opposed to normal and natural military secrecy—that the Kennedy administration insisted on, and the carelessness with which it treated the fate of the Cuban exiles. □

Has the Prodigal Returned?

Neil Postman: *Teaching as a Conserving Activity*; Delacorte Press; New York.

by Edward A. Wynne

Neil Postman is the author or co-author of several popular, engagingly written books on education. The perspective of his works—up to this point—is suggested by the title of his most prominent book, *Teaching as a Subversive Activity*. His books engaged some readers because they presented simple solutions to complex problems, and because his solutions often invited educators to enlist their students in covert aggression (against society) or treat novelty as synonymous with cre-

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ativity. In short, his work epitomized many of the educational fads of the 60's.

As the title implies, *Teaching as a Conserving Activity* reveals that Postman has undergone a partial conversion. In assessing the significance of that change, we should first interpret its implications for many people who have not converted—those who always thought much of the 60's was a big mistake.

The parable of the prodigal son has always troubled me; but one of the purposes of profound religion is to disturb believers. Remember that one son stayed home, while the prodigal roamed. When the prodigal had wasted all of his money and returned home, the father directed that the fatted calf be killed to provide a welcome feast. The continuously dutiful son then asked, "Why is all this show put on for an irresponsible one who has

finally seen the light, while I've never erred and still receive no dramatic recognition?" As best I understand, the parable signifies the high value communities should put on *wholesomeness*, and the demands that valuation places on responsible citizens. A similar theme is iterated in the parable of the lost sheep, and the duty of the good shepherd to reconstitute his flock.

Obviously, there is good precedent for treating Postman's potential for conversion with sympathy and interest. If my preceding remarks were directly related to Christian tradition, I have no doubt that many other important religious traditions mirror similar themes. However, for persons of a more secular temper, let me offer a more empirical proposal: "We should never underestimate the potential of human beings for learning and changing." Often this potential is unfulfilled, and often it reveals itself slowly, but other humans are not strict images—unless we refuse to allow them to grow.

An interesting theme in the Postman book is the idea that formal education, to some extent, must maintain a degree of tension in its relationship with the popular values of society. Education should not simply prepare its students to be mirror images of the norms of the surrounding society. Instead, it should try to identify deficiencies in the society, and conduct itself so that its students, when they mature, are not crippled by these deficiencies or can even (in adulthood) help to try to correct them. In a way, this theme is consistent with *Teaching as a Subversive Activity*. Ten years ago, Postman thought poorly of conventional society. He thus wrote a book recommending that schools and teachers act as subverters. Now he believes society is too enmeshed in pursuing immediate gratification. As a result, he recommends that schools act to support traditional values (through measures such as requiring rigorous homework and by maintaining dress codes). Some of his

recommendations make sense, but . . .

The difficulty is that Postman has not lived and learned enough. The in-temperate, all-or-nothing approach which pervaded *Teaching as a Subversive Activity* still persists. Only this time Postman has found a new super-ordinate villain—not traditionalism, but television. And, just as in his earlier work, there is some merit to his suspicions, but his conclusions are severely overdrawn. This overdrawn gravely undermines his diagnosis and proposed treatment. It is notoriously true that modern children spend a great deal of time watching television, and that much of the programming is at best trivial, and at worst destructive. Still, it is simplistic to attribute all—or most—of the deficiencies identified in the conduct of our young to television. Similarly, it is unsound to almost totally relate prescriptions for improving schools to the need to correct the harmful effects of television.

Television is not the only important change that has occurred in our youths' environment during our lives. It is simply the one that is most evident to uninformed people without much perspective. There is a great variety of other changes which many social scientists have concluded are extremely deleterious. Divorce has increased; the proportion of families living in suburban and urban areas has increased (while the rural proportion has declined); real family income has increased; school size has increased; the level of bureaucracy in schools and colleges has increased;

the amount of time young people spend enrolled in school and college has increased; the fragmentation of school programs and student groupings in schools has increased; the number of children in individual families has declined, and their age grouping has become more clustered; the variety and number of household chores allocated to children has declined; the quality of paid work available for young people has deteriorated; and the quality of school discipline codes and grading standards have declined.

Most of these changes are not as immediately evident as some kids watching television. They can only be identified through reflection, adopting a long-range perspective, and reading some tedious studies. Estimating the cumulative harmful effects of these changes, and their relative importance to each other, is a topic for an ongoing debate. But most persons concerned with such issues would conclude—as I do—that the harmful effect of these changes on our young is far greater than the wrongs wrought by television. And, if one's thinking tends to such a direction, it is evident that the medley of education-related remedies needed are far more complex than simple worries about how to cure televisionitis.

In sum, let us rejoice. A prodigal son is trying to return. Let us also hope he can come along further, and finally rid himself of his temptation to pursue the facile, whether it's done in defense of either good or bad causes. □

Books in the Mail

Dialogues on American Politics by Irving Louis Horowitz and Seymour Martin Lipset; Oxford University Press; New York. Scholarly reflections on the state of America in the late 1970's.

Paradoxes of Education in a Republic by Eva T. H. Brann; University of Chicago Press; Chicago. An inquiry into the root dilemmas of American education.

Dorothy L. Sayers: A Literary Biography by Ralph E. Hone; Kent State University Press; Kent, Ohio. A look at the work of Dorothy L. Sayers and the life which inspired it.

As Her Whimsey Took Her: Critical Essays on the Work of Dorothy L. Sayers edited by Margaret P. Hanney; Kent State University Press; Kent, Ohio. A collection of literary criticism covering the varied writings of Dorothy L. Sayers.

Outdated Gomorrahs

James Baldwin: *Just Above My Head*; Dial Press; New York.

by Allan C. Brownfeld

In an essay written in *Partisan Review* in 1949, when he was twenty-four, Baldwin declared his determination to reject the path of protest which a black writer in America was expected to pursue. Rather than depict the black man as "merely a member of a Society or Group" who has been condemned by whites to poverty and ignorance, Baldwin expressed his desire to understand black men as "something resolutely undefinable, unpredictable." He decided, in effect, to write about men, not about racial symbols. He went so far as to criticize such novels as Richard Wright's *Native Son* which, he argued, was crippled by hatred and fear. Its failure, he wrote, came from "its rejection of life, the human being . . . in its insistence that it is his categorization alone which is real and which cannot be transcended." All of which indicates that James Baldwin has, for many years, been struggling to find a proper literary identity.

Slowly, however, James Baldwin changed his view. He was, it is reported, stricken by Eldridge Cleaver's criticism in *Soul on Ice*, when Cleaver denounced the characters in Baldwin's novels for engaging in various sexual activities "in a vacuum," without a proper awareness of race, of politics, of economics. Other black nationalists and black radicals joined in the attack.

Apparently, James Baldwin could not remain indifferent to such intellectually refined charges, and he reacted. In *No Name in the Streets*, written in 1972, he rejected the creed of nonviolence and wrote favorably of the guerrilla tactics

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of the Black Panthers. He came to view Cleaver's attack as a "necessary warning." Finally, in *Just Above My Head*, Baldwin portrays the black communal life and culture which he had found absent from the "protest" novels of the past. It is clearly a "black" book, in which whites exist only as remote demons; it is a love song—as Hall Montana, its narrator, says to his brother,

"He suddenly seems a much more universal writer . . . There is incest, prostitution, rape, endless horror and an equal dose of fervent passion."

—*Playboy*

"It must be said that Mr. Baldwin writes about homosexual love with something like genius."

—John Leonard
New York Times

Arthur. Dead in his 39th year, Arthur was a gospel singer and a homosexual.

The novel pictures the lives of the Montana and Miller families, from Harlem of the 1940's and 1950's to the present time. Julia, a precocious nine-year-old preacher, is exploited by her greedy, weak father and feared by her weak, timid brother. Jimmy, her resentful seven-year-old brother, is largely ignored. Julia and Hall will eventually fall in love, as will Jimmy and Arthur. The events are less a story than a recitation of happenings: the Trumpets of Zion quartet must tour the South; Julia must leave the ministry and endure abuse from her father; the Korean War, the Black Muslims and the civil-rights movement appear. Throughout, Hall insists that Arthur remains "the apple of my eye. I worried about cops and billy clubs and pushers, jails, rooftops, basements, the river, the morgue: I moved like an advance scout in wicked and hostile territory, my whole life was a strategy and a prayer; I knew I could not live without my brother."

Many of James Baldwin's critics have charged that he has squandered his talent on his obsession with sex. In *Just*

Above My Head, there are many pages routinely devoted to explicit accounts of both homosexual and heterosexual encounters. This time, however, the sexual monotony has an equal partner in Baldwin's humdrum, cliché attacks on whites and America, that citadel of hostile and pale-faced enemies. Mixed in, nevertheless, is the complex feeling which any human being feels for his

native land. "I don't think anybody can really hate his country, I don't think that's possible," Baldwin writes, "but you can certainly despise the road your country travels, and the people they elect to lead them on that road. If I had been a white man, I would have been ashamed, really, to send a black man anywhere to fight for me. But shame is individual, not collective, and collectively speaking, white people have no shame. They have the shortest memories of any people in the world—which explains, no doubt, why they have no shame." And, at some points, he seems to understand that racism—fear of those who are different—is not simply an affliction of whites, but a dilemma facing all men: "They believed that they hated white people, and that's no wonder. They were far from the hard apprehension that they simply could not endure being despised, far from the knowledge that almost everybody is, could not conceive that the world, or at least the world we know, could be so tremendously populated by people who despise each other because each despises himself . . . Thus, they imagined that they hated white people be-

cause they were not black, and could not imagine that they terrified white people because white people are not white . . .”

Baldwin has been living in self-imposed exile in the south of France for many years. His comparison of Birmingham, Alabama, to Sodom and Gomorrah could hardly come from one who has observed the dramatic changes in race relations in the American South in recent years. Birmingham now has a black mayor. So does Atlanta. George Wallace now says that he was wrong, that segregation should indeed have come to an end. In *Just Above My Head*, Baldwin has one of his characters say, “You better not wait . . . They ain’t going to change their laws for us—it just ain’t in them. They change their laws when their laws make *them* uncomfortable . . .” That this was written by a man fully aware of the 1954 Supreme Court decision outlawing segregation, of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, of school busing and affirmative action, makes Baldwin’s standard bitterness look spurious. It turns into platitude, which a writer of his standing can’t afford without impairing that standing.

There is some glimmer of hope, however, and it is squeezed between the official messages. Arthur is told by his mother, “I’m glad you don’t have to ride in no Jim Crow car, like me and your daddy had to do. But, Jim Crow car or no Jim Crow car, we still had to raise you—it was a good thing they changed the law, but we couldn’t wait for that . . . So you go on down and test them waters . . .”

It is, of course, *always* difficult to have to take responsibility for one’s own future. But once the legal barriers have been removed, once the schools and training programs are open, once strenuous efforts are made to compensate for the discrimination of the past—then to blame white society for *any* failure makes little sense; somehow others must now take responsibility for anything. Resisting or renouncing

these responsibilities seems to be the gist of today’s race relations in America, and it still waits for a great black novelist to render it justice. James Baldwin seems to recognize the tension which an end to legalized racism brings, but he has failed to confront it, preferring to rely upon the symbolism and rhetoric of the past.

That Baldwin is very much an American can hardly be questioned. Beyond the racial consciousness and sexual obsession remains a sense of place and an experience shared. Julia, upon returning from Africa, tells Hall about her new awareness: “You’re blind, that’s the first thing you realize is that you’re blind. Later you begin to see—something. And, then, you begin to see why you couldn’t see. But at first—damn, you know more about the Mississippi cracker, even though you hate him and you know he hates you. And then . . . you see how people try to hold on to what they know, no matter how ugly it is. It’s better than nothing!”

As absurd as it sounds, it would apparently come as a great surprise to Baldwin to learn that tens of thousands of black Americans have moved into

the middle class, that a greater percentage of black Americans are now studying in institutions of higher learning than are white Englishmen, Frenchmen or Germans, that black Americans now hold some of the nation’s highest offices. He would be equally surprised to learn that, according to our latest polling data, the questions which most trouble black Americans are precisely the questions which most trouble white Americans: the quality of education, inflation, crime in the streets. We have made tremendous strides toward creating a free and open society in which an individual’s race will be incidental. Reading Baldwin, however, would leave the reader unaware of any of these simple facts, which renders his message sloppy, to say the least. He no longer seems to be certain where he belongs in today’s black world and this confused book is the evidence. In his 1949 *Partisan Review* essay, Baldwin wrote: “I want to be an honest man and a good writer.” Either he no longer knows exactly how he feels, or he has become so deluded over the years of racial posturing and politics that he seems like an anachronism for the 1980’s. □

Alienation à la Howard Elman

Ernest Hebert: *The Dogs of March*; Viking Press; New York.

by Christina Murphy

A 20th-century American novel can be expected to take a dim view of pastoral themes. The vision of nature as idyllic and natural man as morally triumphant are perspectives lost to the modern age, however strongly they formed the framework of 19th-century American idealism. In a world bounded by technology and pockmarked with complexity, nature seems to the modern

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novelist not a sanctuary for idealism but one more value savaged by the misperceptions of our age. Natural man, primitive and instinctive, is not heroic, but merely out of step with the times. However nobly or despicably he fights the economic and societal pressures that threaten his survival, he is an insignificant warrior doomed to either violent destruction or the painful self-awakening of compromise.

Ernest Hebert’s *The Dogs of March*, a first novel, does not deviate from the pattern of modern novels which see in the defeat of primitivism a moral lesson of values lost and dreams exchanged. Were it not for Hebert’s technical skills and the depth of his character portray-

als, *The Dogs of March* would be a rather typical antipastoral creation detailing the struggles of a man who lives by instinct and the feel of things against the civilized mentality and its passion for abstractions, rules of law and power games. Hebert's experience of the world is an insightful and convincing journey through the consciousness of a character in the process of a redefinition of the self.

Central to the novel is the sense of loss experienced by Howard Elman, the novel's protagonist, as he finds himself displaced from the reality and the values he used to know by forces he only dimly understands. Edmund Husserl's "capacity of a single moment of experience to unfold itself into endless perspectives of reality" is, in this case, an accident at the mill in which Howard loses a finger. The lost finger serves as a prelude of what Howard himself senses: little by little, by painful degrees, reality is chopping away at him, carrying off pieces of himself and of the world he values.

At fifty, Howard has lost his job as mill foreman to the political ambitions of the company president who sells the mill to run for Congress. The loss of his job brings him into closer contact with his family, whom he discovers he doesn't know and cannot communicate with despite his nostalgic longings to return to the simpler times when his children admired him and his wife and he had not drifted into the separate realities of different convictions, differing needs. Especially painful to him is the loss of his son Freddy, whom he had envisioned as a younger and better version of himself, but who now, through the filter of an educated mind, looks at Howard with contempt. Further isolation occurs. His old friends at the mill drop away to suicide, insanity, economic displacement. Alcohol and infidelity do little to assuage Howard's growing realization that he is alone and that he has failed in his personal relationships with his wife and children.

Howard's refuge in his isolation is

his private fortress of junked cars. The automobile parts he can manipulate at will into new creations and the fifty acres of land he owns command Howard's entire allegiance. Toward each he feels "a priestly duty"—land and a stockpile of material goods to be worshiped, ministered to and protected from attack. His adversary for his citadel is an unexpected one—Zoe Cutter, an affluent New Yorker who sees "that the country would thrive if only the city were brought to it . . ." Mrs. Cutter is intent upon developing Howard's land commercially and ridding the countryside of the eyesore of his junked cars. She introduces a petition for a junked-car ordinance, narrowly defeated at a town-hall meeting. Through her real-estate agent, Bert Reason, she offers Elman an extravagant price for his land, at a time when Elman's unemployment and his wife's illness make the offer essential to accept. She wins his son Freddy through seduction and alienates Howard from the affections of his daughter Heather through the enticement of material offerings and opportunities that Howard cannot provide.

Howard's rage at Mrs. Cutter and Bert Reason is direct, immediate and physical; he recognizes that his adversaries fight differently: "He wished somehow that he could arm them, make a fight of it. But that was not possible. They fought with words, with law, with psychology, not with guns or knives or fists or anything else he understood. They were part of a vast, evil, nameless, incomprehensible conspiracy to reduce him to dust." When an attempt to murder Mrs. Cutter and Reason fails through because they fail to keep an appointment with him, Howard flees the city and takes to the woods, where he encounters "the dogs of March"—packs of well-cared-for, fattened, domestic dogs turned savage by instinct and chasing winter-worn, starving deer through spring snows to their dismemberment and death. When Howard confronts the dogs, hoping to even the unfair odds, he realizes that the grim

and bloody conflict is a symbol of his own plight. He, too, is being hunted, pursued, ripped to pieces by a pack of city dogs intent only upon the savage brutality of conquest and destruction. The realization leaves Howard "free and sad with knowledge."

What exactly the knowledge is which Howard derives from his violent encounter with "the dogs of March," Hebert does not delineate in full detail, but the novel moves swiftly to a conclusion in which Howard is seen as a proponent of the philosophical position that all victories, even Pyrrhic ones, must be self-defined. Thus, Howard enters into a compromise with Mrs. Cutter from which he feels he emerges the victor: he will sell her all but a quarter-acre of his land and allow her to remove from his property the junked cars she so vehemently despises. One week later, however, he moves in a twelve-by-seventy-foot trailer and sets it up on concrete blocks. "He hated it, but it satisfied his purpose, which was to wound Mrs. Cutter. He would have given anything to see the look on her face when she pulled the drapes to gaze at her hard-won view and there, conspicuous as a pig, was a trailer." He surrenders Freddy to his new life of writing books in California, and Heather to her alteration into the world of Mrs. Cutter's values and ideals. The cutting of the ties to the past is complete: "He had his land, such as it was, and he had his revenge, such as it was, and he had some wisdom about the world, such as it was, and he had paid the price."

The encounter in the woods with "the dogs of March" has left Howard "somehow rich for new growth, like a burned-over woodland." He begins the process of a new relationship with his wife, based upon gentle acceptance and a forgiveness of past sins and failures. He forms a trucking business, enrolls in GED courses, and agrees to a new start for his life. His understanding is rich and full. "He didn't care anymore how old he was. Fifty, forty-eight, fifty-

two—it made no difference. A good man was by turns old and young.”

Gertrude Stein has commented that there are no true characters, only character types. True artistic vision is achieved when a character type is so carefully and precisely drawn that he transcends the limits of thematics and reveals insight into the self and the human condition. While the themes of

The Dogs of March are not new in the world of fiction and Howard Elman is, in many ways, a character type as fundamental to American literature as Natty Bumppo being driven out by the Marmaduke Temples of the world, there is an insight into the mechanics of the human will and the resiliency of the human spirit which should not pass unnoticed. □

Regulation Blues

Murray L. Weidenbaum: *The Future of Business Regulation*; AMACOM; New York.

by Harold C. Gordon

During the past fifteen years, federal regulation of business has more than doubled. Operating costs have been increased, prices have been forced up, companies have been driven bankrupt, jobs have been lost, consumer preferences have been overridden, and constitutional rights have been trampled upon by overzealous bureaucrats. Productivity has been slashed and innovation dulled. The price tag for regulation has been estimated at over \$100 billion a year—more than \$500 for every man, woman and child in America—and this figure is likely to increase in the years ahead. What can be done?

A brave attempt to answer this question has been made by Dr. Murray Weidenbaum, Director of the Center for the Study of American Business at Washington University in St. Louis, and a leading critic of regulation. In his short, balanced and fundamentally optimistic book, he offers some wise counsel on how to shrink big government.

The chief defect of our present regulatory system, maintains Dr. Weidenbaum, lies not in its size, complexity

or expense, but rather in its counterproductive nature. He writes:

“The encroachment of government power in the private sector in recent years has been massive. Moreover, it has been, in the main, self-defeating. Despite the noble intentions, government intervention on an increasing scale has interfered with and inhibited the ability of the typical business enterprise to meet the needs of the consumer. Furthermore, the intervention has occurred in ways which have tended to minimize, rather than maximize, the achievement of the basic social objectives which have been the motivating force for the expansion of government involvement in private decision making.”

There is no dearth of examples with which to illustrate the truth of that observation. The Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (ERISA), designed to safeguard workers' pensions, instead caused thousands of smaller companies to terminate their pension plans because of the red tape it imposed. The Consumer Product Safety Commission, by requiring that children's sleepwear be fireproofed, led manufacturers to adopt a flame retardant that was later found to be carcinogenic. The Environmental Protection Agency, by banning the release of grain dust into the atmosphere, substantially increased the number of grain elevator explosions throughout the country, with resulting net increases in pollution and loss of

life. The Occupational Safety and Health Administration, after forcing employers to spend millions to comply with its regulations, has yet to prove that it has made workplaces appreciably safer.

Regulation so often backfires because the modern bureaucrat, like Adam Smith's “man of system,” insists on imposing his own master plans on reluctant, independent-minded individuals. “Making operational business decisions,” says Dr. Weidenbaum, “is precisely what government should avoid, but that is what now dominates so many regulatory programs.”

Direct intervention of this type should be used only as a last resort. There are other, less obtrusive ways of realizing social goals. Tax incentives are one, and providing consumers with information is another. Most people prefer to make their own choices, and government should assist them in doing so, rather than trying to overrule them by regulatory fiat.

Once this change of direction has been effected, cost-benefit analyses, sunset laws and other budgetary devices can be employed to further reduce the role, and ultimately the size, of government. Dr. Weidenbaum sees three conditions as essential to bringing about this change: greater self-criticism and self-restraint by government, greater understanding on the part of the public as to how our system works, and greater involvement by business in shaping public attitudes and public policy.

A realist, Dr. Weidenbaum suggests that the creation of the first and second conditions will depend on how successful the business community is in creating the third. Business must make a better case for itself than it is presently doing. It must improve its public image, it must encourage free enterprise advocates in the academy and in the media, and it must convince the American people that they will derive substantial benefits from deregulation.

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Dr. Weidenbaum has some harsh words for corporate executives who pay lip service to the idea of free enterprise but regularly seek subsidies, tariffs and other special privileges from Washington. He also suggests that trade associations set standards of ethical conduct for member companies.

With regard to communicating with the public, Dr. Weidenbaum shares Milton Friedman's skepticism of those commercials that portray oil companies as being in operation for purely altruistic reasons. "Business," he writes, "should take straightforward positions on public policy issues on the assumption that is obvious to all: business is not a charitable institution but an economic enterprise. Proposals for public policy that will enhance the ability of the private enterprise system to meet consumer

needs should be supported. Examples range from tax changes encouraging savings and investment to reform of onerous government regulations."

Dr. Weidenbaum's avowed goal is a "streamlined" regulatory system, rather than some stateless libertarian ideal. While doctrinaire libertarians will fault him for this, most observers of the contemporary scene will agree with him that the latter is not a politically viable alternative. Perhaps it will never be. Few free market theoreticians—from Adam Smith to Hayek—would totally deny government a role in promoting the social and economic welfare of society. The great difficulty has always been to keep government from gutting the private sector in the process. Dr. Weidenbaum offers fresh insight into an old problem. □

only in tone and not much in that," says Gies. "A single issue separated out Robert R. McCormick and his *Tribune*: 'isolationism.'"

Yet his pleas for neutrality seem tame by today's standards of acceptable dissent. He had urged a hands-off policy in the First World War, but served as an artillery officer when America entered that conflict; Pershing, in fact, had offered him a generalship if he would stay on after Armistice Day. After Pearl Harbor he fully supported the war effort—but was not about to desist from what he felt were constructive criticisms of strategy or performance.

McCormick was an odd candidate for the title of demagogue. The grandson of *Tribune* founder Joseph Medill on one side and reaper inventor Cyrus McCormick on the other, he enjoyed the benefits of East Coast schools and an upbringing in England, where his father served as part of the diplomatic mission to the Court of St. James. His early career, in fact, bears a slight resemblance to the young Theodore Roosevelt, a silk-stockinged progressive Republican. And like Roosevelt he tried his hand at local politics, serving as a Chicago ward alderman and as President of the Chicago Sanitary District, where his record was clearly reformist. Again like TR, he compiled an honorable record in wartime, seeing action in Pershing's Mexican Expeditionary Force and in World War I.

His support of the GOP presidents during the 20's was actually tepid at best. At the completion of Herbert Hoover's inaugural address he instantly cabled the *Tribune*: "This man won't do." Later the *Trib* editorialized that Hoover "decided to make the Republican Party the party of Bryan, dry with all the teeth of prohibition in it, pacifist and internationalist and economically satisfactory to the radicals who are elected as Republicans and conduct themselves as Bryanistic Democrats."

Yet this was nothing compared to

The Colonel & the *Trib*

Joseph Gies: *The Colonel of Chicago*; E. P. Dutton; New York.

by David Pietrusza

Colonel Robert McCormick, editor of the *Chicago Tribune* from 1914 until his death in 1955, rivaled the archfiend Hearst as the bête noire of American liberals in the turbulent years that saw the nation shift from laissez faire to the modern welfare state. His opposition to the New Deal of Franklin Roosevelt and to American intervention in the Second World War caused him to be mocked as "one of the finest minds of the 14th century." He was branded as "fascist," "demagogic" and "treasonous." During the war his arrest was discussed in official Washington. The *Tribune* was burned in public bonfires. The *Montreal Star* advocated that Canada cut off his supply of newsprint. A

Mr. Pietrusza is a free-lance critic and a frequent contributor to these pages.

Chicago grand jury threatened his indictment. He was tabbed as obsessively anti-British, a die-hard Republican and personally eccentric.

Joseph Gies, a self-proclaimed liberal and a biographer of Roosevelt and Truman, has endeavored to dissect this now-orthodox perception of the Chicago publisher. Able to view Colonel McCormick's lengthy and varied career through the calming vistas of time, Gies finds it wildly at odds with the actual McCormick. While the Colonel had his pet causes—and unlike the common herd he was able to give vent to them in the pages of an influential daily—his general thrust was no more unusual than that of any other publisher of his day.

He supported the Republican Party generally, opposed Prohibition, called for balanced budgets and turned green when he saw what fellow Groton graduate Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal really meant. "Big-city daily newspapers and rural weeklies in the East, Midwest, South and far West almost uniformly shared the same prejudices, varying

his reaction to Franklin Roosevelt. His antipathy to "that man in the White House" was open and boundless. As the 1936 election approached, the *Tribune* ran such headlines as "Only 217 days remain to save your country. What are you doing to save it?" and telephone operators at the newspaper greeted incredulous callers with the same salutation.

And as Roosevelt slowly maneuvered the nation into World War II via Lend-Lease, destroyer deals (which oddly enough was an old McCormick idea), attacks on German subs and trade embargoes, the *Tribune* fought a lonely campaign for American neutrality. The campaign was a responsible one. The paper deplored Lindbergh's statements on the Jews, found Hitler abhorrent long before the outbreak of war, and believed that "the case for American participation in the war does not rest on detestation of Hitler. If it did, our navy, with the consent of the whole nation, would have started across the Atlantic the day Poland was invaded."

But there was much more to the McCormick story than opposition to FDR. The *Trib* itself established certain standards of excellence for reporting (it won several Pulitzer Prizes under McCormick until his editorial policies put the paper beyond the pale), for developing correspondents (on its roster at one time or another were Robert Cromie, William L. Shirer, George Seldes, Willard Edwards, Edmond Taylor, Floyd Givvons, Ring Lardner, Finley Peter Dunne, Walter Howey), for being one of the few American dailies to maintain its own reporters abroad, for introducing such processes as rotogravure and coloroto, and for such "scoops" as securing the text of the Treaty of Versailles.

The *Tribune* was also a wild and woolly part of Chicago in the 1920's, and even before that exuberant decade arrived it was creating waves. Its circulation war with Hearst's *American* and his *Examiner* from 1910 on were real wars, unfortunately setting a precedent

for the gang wars that wracked the city during Prohibition. It battled constantly with flamboyant Mayor "Big Bill" Thompson and eventually helped to drive Chicago's last Republican mayor from office. One of its own reporters, Jake Lingle, after his sidewalk murder was found to have been one of the kingpins of the Capone mob.

Such was the life of Colonel McCormick, and so it is recounted by Joseph Gies in a biography of verve, spirit and intelligence. What Mr. Gies somehow forgets is to speculate on how McCormick would feel if he could read the opinions of today's *Tribune* on culture, mores, ideological commitment. But that's another story. □

Happiness, Luck and Social Science

Christopher Jencks et al.: *Who Gets Ahead? The Determinants of Economic Success in America*; Basic Books; New York.

by William E. Cage

At a time when most people are struggling to keep even, the question of who gets ahead seems anachronistic. The question, though, is intriguing for a variety of reasons, and a substantial amount of research has been conducted in attempts to answer it. The search for the answer to "who gets ahead" has in fact aged and evolved to the point where Jencks and his co-authors can use up the better part of this volume in a review and critique of the major research efforts in this area.

As a review of the literature, *Who Gets Ahead?* is a qualified success. The qualification is that the reader should be a sociologist or employed at a policy-making substation in the Department of Health and Welfare. Without the perspective and interest peculiar to those occupations, it is doubtful that a reader would find much in this volume to capture his attention. Jencks and his colleagues-in-print have done a creditable job in investigating and interpreting eleven surveys which attempt to uncover the determinants of economic

success in the U.S. The surveys are primarily statistical in nature and Jencks's work is the same type. There are tables, percentages, coefficients, regressions, exponents and R-squares sufficient to keep any statistician busy for days. The authors of *Who Gets Ahead?* appear to be well grounded in their statistics, and their sifting and winnowing in an area so replete with policy implications deserves commendation. Jencks et al. are also deserving of commendation for bringing to light—certainly unintentionally—two matters which are of fundamental importance in their own right.

The first pertains to research methodology in the social sciences. While that subject in itself is esoteric, it is increasingly important as social scientists come to influence public policy formulation. In *Who Gets Ahead?* and apparently in the original articles that the Jencks crew reviews, the reader's attention is directed to such questions as what effect does family background, academic ability, noncognitive traits, etc., have on a person's occupational status and economic success. It is easy, when trying to answer such questions, to apply all manner of statistical procedures and tests and—if the tests are favorable—then leap from statistical correlation to social causation. But the leap is over a tremendous chasm, and the ground below is littered with the nonsense of the ages. *Who Gets Ahead?* may be full of impor-

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tant information about the determinants of success or it may have more than its share of nonsense. What Jencks and his fellow authors have omitted almost completely is any theoretical underpinning for all of their laborious statistical work. Without adequate theoretical underpinning, we are simply at a loss to say whether the statistics mean anything. For example, among those who teach statistics, a story has circulated of an erudite statistician who once became fed up with the large volume of correlations which people were using to justify all sorts of ideas and programs. He used the most sophisticated tests and procedures and, with tongue in cheek, demonstrated how the amount of rainfall in Chicago influenced the juvenile delinquency rate in New York. Of course, there is no causal link between those two factors, but that point appears to be overlooked in a fair amount of the research done in the social sciences. Correlation among variables, without a reasonable and logical explanation of *how* one factor influences the other, is meaningless. The statistical work at best can lend support to or raise questions about theories of human behavior. It can never by itself establish cause and effect.

The second matter of fundamental importance is a policy issue. *Who Gets Ahead?* is, in final analysis, a treatise on how to bring greater equality to the distribution of income. If it could be determined what factors bring economic success, the implication is that government policy should either attempt to alter those determinants so as to reduce the "edge" of those with large income potential or at least should try to strengthen that set of factors among the poor. For those who follow such discussions, it is worth noting that Jencks's work leaves him with an unhappy (for him) conclusion. Because their statistical work seems to indicate (spuriously, in this reviewer's opinion) that family background is a primary determinant of economic success, and

because there is little that policy can do about family background (Orwell, where are you?), Jencks closes his book with this statement: "Thus, if we want to redistribute income, the most effective strategy is probably still to redistribute income." That lament betrays an acceptance of the redistributionist ethic, and I suspect Jencks would not hesitate to admit to such a belief. But suppose his work had revealed—with all the necessary theoretical foundation—that there were three or four factors which unquestionably determine a person's economic success. Further, suppose that government then goes to work on those factors so as to equalize everyone's *chance* of success. What then becomes of the human race? With the causative factors equalized, success then becomes a game of chance, a throw of the dice. It is a short step from facing life with such a total randomness imposed by "society" to concluding that any effort is simply not worthwhile. When men give up struggling and striving, they lose their humanness.

That is to say, the debate over income inequality misses the basic point of human existence. We are here to utilize

our talents and capabilities to the utmost. There is no guarantee that life will be easy. In fact, those who presumably "have it easy" very often face the greatest challenge of all: to get off their duffs and make something of whatever years they have left. Inequality is not just an incentive to the poor to work harder—it is equally a challenge to those who do not have to work. The redistributionists, with all their good intentions, fail to understand that a good life is not measured by your final status (economic or otherwise) but rather by how well you have used what you have had. It is undeniable that economic poverty is an unpleasant situation, but it in no way is a barrier to happiness and satisfaction. Spiritual poverty, the kind that stands in the way of a person doing his best and striving his hardest, is an absolutely impenetrable barrier to that same happiness and satisfaction. For that reason, *Who Gets Ahead?* is—or should be—a purely academic exercise. This reviewer shudders to think of policy implications being drawn from it, as they surely will. Such is the dismal state of the social sciences today. □

Musing on Capitalism

Capitalism: Sources of Hostility;
Edited by Ernest van den Haag;
Epoch Books; New Rochelle, New
York.

by William F. Campbell

In March 1975, the Liberty Fund held a conference to explore the various sources of hostility to the market system. The result is this book, edited by Professor van den Haag, and published for the Heritage Foundation. Besides an introduction by van den Haag and a summarizing chapter by Stanley Roth-

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man, the bulk of the book is three major papers delivered by van den Haag, Peter Bauer and Lewis S. Feuer, followed by comments from Roger Starr, Nathan Glazer and Dale Vree respectively.

Whether the sources are envy, lust for power, Oedipal problems or even narrow self-interest, the prospects for capitalism seem bleak. In fact, this seems to be the only unifying thread among the participants. The major source of disagreement lies in the definitions of rationality and irrationality and their conformity to economic patterns of reasoning. Let us explore these themes in the individual contributions.

Van den Haag sets the stage in his introduction by criticizing economists

for ignoring nonrational sources of hostility to the market. They reduce everything to economic self-interest, and cannot understand the "irrational pseudoreasoning" and "chiliastic longing" which are often the basis of hostility. He then criticizes noneconomist intellectuals, such as psychologists and sociologists, for being reluctant to explore the sources of their own hostile ideology. Why is it hard for intellectuals to explore their own ideologies? Presumably because in unmasking their ideology they will have to come face to face with their "Confusion, Envy, Fear and Longing" (the title of van den Haag's contribution). If they are honest they will have to write down the value, pecuniary and nonpecuniary, of their investment in their disciplines and their self-esteem. But economics on a rational level is essential since it tells us what the "right economic policy or system is or at least what policies or systems cannot achieve our ends." Van den Haag's "or" is a very crucial one since it raises the question of exactly what "our ends" are. If "our ends" are coextensive with individual preferences, utility functions or the primacy of human freedom defined as the absence of external coercion, then all hostility to the market is irrational by definition.

If "our ends" are open-ended in a non-liberal way and can be filled in by Auguste Comte, Adolf Hitler or Charles Manson, then no motivation can be considered irrational since all ends are equally legitimate. This is perilously close to nihilism, which Leo Strauss has defined as "the view that every preference, however evil, base or insane, has to be judged before the tribunal of reason to be as legitimate as any other preference."

It should be recognized that the source of many intellectuals' hostility to capitalism is that it is often portrayed as a construct or ideology which systematizes nihilism. It remains to be proved that those who wish to preserve distinctions between good and evil are irrational.

Van den Haag's pessimism is derived from his observation that "no system can survive in the end if it is perceived as unjust by those who feel disadvantaged in it and by those who benefit from it." The hostility of the winners, the rich and middle class, is probably more important as a threat to capitalism than the losers. It is from the winners' ranks that the academics and bureaucrats will emerge to replace the vulgarity of the marketplace with their own moralized vision of the snug society. Van den Haag notes: "The rich seldom feel that their wealth is deserved; their children almost never do." Therefore guilt. To put it into an older framework and a perennial thread of American history, we have succumbed to the sickness of Luxury. All the evils that the 17th- and 18th-century Puritan divines and Classical Republicans warned us about are contemporary realities.

The need for religion is a theme touched on by almost all the participants. Van den Haag points out that resentment about inequalities was earlier defused by religious resignation but is now vented against the social and economic system. Furthermore, creating real equality of opportunity will only intensify problems even further: who wants to know that one is a loser because one is a loser!

According to van den Haag, capitalism creates a modern world which is basically secular, replaces piety with progress, and destroys custom and tradition. That this is not simply a Christian problem is pointed out by Peter Bauer, who focuses on the less-developed countries. Literati there as well as here "feel much superior to the rest of the population, while at the same time regretting their isolation." Much of their hostility originated in Western colleges and universities; Western secularism also freed them from the devotion to custom and tradition which still characterizes the native populations. Finally, rational self-interest helps explain their hostility toward the market because they

are the bureaucrats in control—the "new class" with full plenipotentiary powers.

Nathan Glazer, in his comment on Bauer's paper, raises what he thinks is a mystery. Where in Western universities are the market opponents? If you seek a monument, look around! Even in economics the *rigorism* of perfectly competitive markets can be used to bludgeon any real world economy. Add to this the bulk of the courses where attitudes are formed by sneers, shrugs of shoulders and plain snobbery: history, literature, philosophy, psychology, sociology, etc. etc. etc.

Roger Starr claims that the evasion of choice and the refusal of responsibility is the source of the hostility to the marketplace and can only be purged by the fires of totalitarianism:

"For me, the hope of future acceptance of the responsibility of choice lies on the far side of the experience of the Russian state, exemplified for us by the emergence of these startling, almost religious figures who have come from the darkness of the Soviet world to express human responsibility on a scale that we have not seen in many centuries . . . The appalling and depressing aspect of their appearance is the reminder of the suffering and terror we shall have to pass through before we are prepared to recapture the responsibilities of our common humanity."

The irony is that many of those who accept responsibility and seriousness of choice are precisely those who become revolutionaries. Lewis Feuer points out that when man's aggressive drives have no external challenges they become vented toward the self and society. The market and capitalism were the first to channel aggressive drives into the constructive uses of commerce and industry rather than war, conquest and plunder. Once man has solved his basic problems, i.e., achieved high levels of comfort, he becomes a problem-seeker, or a "dialectical personality," whose

only motivation is unrestricted change. Although Feuer discusses two sorts of ways in which to distinguish rational from irrational motivation, namely choosing disproportionate means and self-destructive ends, it is not clear that he applies these categories to the critics of capitalism. Thus, Vree, commenting on Feuer, takes his views personally, since Vree himself was a part of the radical left at Berkeley: "I cannot for the life of me see that I had any Oedipal problems. Now, Feuer might want to argue that I don't understand myself. If so, the burden of proof is surely upon him." Vree's response provides an illuminating explanation of the sources of hostility to capitalism: he wanted a quality of life characterized by austerity and seriousness, which he thought communism would offer. However, after spending some time in East Germany he discovered that even they had sold out to the good life, meaning comfort and security. The point is that capitalism produces comfort and material security; however, it is an eternal truth recognized in fairy tales and Greek philosophy that comfort does not produce happiness. Vree claims that the only satisfactory solution is true religion and the battle against one's sinful self. The hedonism of the West and the asceticism of the East, revolutionary or passive, are both diversions from man's true purpose.

Liberal capitalism can only survive if it manages to give substance to Edmund Burke's "Speech on His Arrival at Bristol" in 1774. What he said about England applies perfectly well to America:

"The distinguishing part of our Constitution is its liberty. To preserve that liberty inviolate seems the particular duty and proper trust of a member of the House of Commons. But the liberty, the only liberty, I mean is a liberty connected with order: that not only exists along with order and virtue, but which cannot exist at all without them. It inheres

in good and steady government, as in its substance and vital principle.

The other source of our power is

commerce, of which you are so large a part, and which cannot exist, no more than your liberty, without a connection with many virtues." □

Commendables

The Attractiveness of Literary Depth

C. P. Snow: *A Coat of Varnish*; Charles Scribner's Sons; New York.

by Mary Ellen Fox

It is a commonplace that a good mystery should be a *roman de mœurs*; in Lord Snow's latest work, a novel is also a mystery. The time is the present, the setting is the upper-class elegance of London's Belgravia district, and the grisly murder is totally out of harmony with its genteel milieu. Snow uses this shocking intrusion into a peaceful and aristocratic environment to point out the turmoil beneath the façade; his purpose is to underline the thin veneer of civilization which covers the more primitive urges of his characters and their modes of behavior like "a coat of varnish."

There is nothing original in this; Proust exposed the venality and decadence of the *haute monde* with far more conciseness and depth. What Snow does achieve—and with superb elegance of style—is to create several multidimensional, highly intelligent personalities whose intellectual and emotional interactions and reactions generate the most suspense and cause the mystery itself to occupy second place. Humphrey, an upper-class retired intelligence officer; Briers, an ambitious and talented middle-class detective; and Luria, a celebrated American Jewish intellectual, constantly bounce ideas off each other; the effect is not only cerebral pyrotechnics but a profound concern for unraveling life's eschatologies as well. When

Dr. Fox is a frequent contributor to these pages.

Briers—a policeman—propounds all the liberal tenets against capital punishment it is ironically Luria, the psychologist from Brooklyn, who supplies the counterpoint: "I gave up accepting liberal optimism a long time ago. I'm not in the least interested in deterrents, pro or contra. I'm not interested in false hopes. I am interested in society preserving its force and virtue . . . it's a profound need of society to take its

"Snow is not the most stylish of writers . . ."

—An Associated Press syndicated literary critic

revenge on people who offend its deepest instincts. I'm sure that society can't be healthy if we pretend that need doesn't exist."

This viewpoint is doubly ironic when cast against Lord Snow's long career as a liberal ideologue. Whether or not absolutely accepted, it is articulated with passion, even conviction. The world of Wimsey, Poirot, Holmes et al., becomes a British Never-never-land. □

Sakharov's Rectitude

Andrei D. Sakharov: *Alarm & Hope*; edited by Efrem Yankelovich and Alfred Friendly, Jr.; Alfred A. Knopf; New York.

There are three major figures of the Soviet dissident movement: Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, Andrei Sakharov and Roy Medvedev. Solzhenitsyn is a traditionalist, a nationalist, a man of a religious, if not mystical, bent. Medvedev is a

reformist but still a Marxist. Sakharov represents a middle ground, the sort of figure the modern Western mind feels most comfortable with, standing for democracy, justice, disarmament, for a true détente.

A nuclear physicist who played a crucial role in the development of the hydrogen bomb, a recipient of both the Lenin and Stálin Prizes, three times a Hero of Socialist Labor, and the youngest member of the U.S.S.R.'s Academy of Sciences, Sakharov was an honored member of the Soviet establishment until he began speaking out in 1968. His book is, however, by no means a smooth and cohesive document. Repetitive in many places, following an often exhortative style, it nevertheless places before the Western public a solid chunk of documentation relative to the whole spectrum of Soviet human rights issues. Those questions, argues Sakharov, are germane not merely to those behind the Iron Curtain but affect the very structure of worldwide peace and security.

He points out that détente, for all its failings, has served as a stumbling block to the Kremlin as it attempts to stifle domestic dissent. To some extent they *do* fear our reactions. Yet Sakharov is realistic enough to urge the West to maintain a tough policy vis-à-vis negotiations with the Soviets, noting that arms talks should ensue "only from positions of equal strength," and excoriating "the shortsightedness and domestic political maneuverings of certain Western politicians, who are prepared to jeopardize the delicate global balance of power for transitory political situations at home."

His own life is a testament to valor in the face of force and brutality. He is playing a high-pressure, high-stakes game, wagering the lives and fortunes of himself, his family and friends, of fellow dissidents he has never met but whose rights he defends. "There is a need to create ideals even when you can't see any path by which to achieve them," he muses, "because if there are no ideals there can be no hope, and then

one would be completely in the dark, in a hopeless blind alley." (DP) □

Libby's Matter-of-Factness

Leona Marshall Libby: *The Uranium People*; Crane Russak & Co. and Charles Scribner's Sons; New York.

Doctor Libby has written a memoir-history of the nuclear era, from the discovery of nuclear fission in the 1930's to the contemporary controversies over nuclear power. She was one of the youngest participants in the Manhattan Project, and worked on the development of the plutonium bomb in Chicago, Hanford and Los Alamos. She gives an account of the work on the first nuclear reactor at the University of Chicago in 1942. Her portraits of Enrico Fermi, Robert Oppenheimer, Leo Szilard, Edward Teller and others may correct some of the popular stereotypes of these men. She throws light on postwar issues such as the decision to build the H-bomb and the Oppenheimer case. Her view of Dr. Oppenheimer, though not unfriendly, is perhaps more critical than has been fashionable. Without the drive of Lawrence, Teller and a few others for the

H-bomb project in 1949-1950, and the discoveries of Teller and Ulam in 1951, she suggests, the United States might have fallen far behind in the nuclear-arms race. As it was, the Soviets began their H-bomb work before the United States and developed a deliverable bomb nine months before we did.

Doctor Libby has some important comments on nuclear-reactor safety and the disposal of nuclear wastes, though unfortunately her book was finished before the Three Mile Island accident. She remains a firm exponent of nuclear-fission development, and argues convincingly that the dangers of plutonium have been exaggerated and that the British have already solved the waste problem by baking fission products into glass. She does suggest that the nuclear industry would be well advised to take a leaf from the Manhattan Project's efforts at Hanford, and settle on one sound, standard reactor design. This would greatly simplify the acceptance and construction of new nuclear-power plants. It is interesting to note that the Hanford reactors, the first large nuclear reactors ever built, were designed and built in eighteen months. It can now take up to ten years to build a new power plant—a rather odd form of progress. (AJL) □

Bradford's *Vade Mecum*

M. E. Bradford: *A Better Guide than Reason*; Sherwood Sugden & Co.; La Salle, Illinois.

For anyone exposed to liberal interpretations of the Founding, Bradford's collection of essays should come as a provocative surprise. He treats the Declaration of Independence primarily as a protest leveled against the violation of the prescribed rights of Englishmen and stresses that document's corporate, not egalitarian, character. He takes the phrase "All men are created equal" to refer to the parity that colonial Englishmen were then asserting as their inher-

ent right in dealing with the English motherland. The Declaration was not, as many modern historians maintain, an affirmation of a democratic society based on political and social equality. Rather, it represented a defense of English liberties and was the work of propertied gentlemen, not of democratic ideologues.

Nowhere does Bradford grow so malignant as when he describes populist and democratic saviors—from Cromwell to FDR. Those who excite the masses with visions of social transformation must end by causing destruction born of illusions and resentments. The

true conservative, as Bradford depicts him, teaches imperfect men to make do in a necessarily imperfect world. In the Old South statesmen like the Delaware planter, John Dickinson, defended a society founded on the realistic political goals of ensuring tranquility and protecting property. According to Bradford, the modern state would justify its existence by returning to similar pursuits. (PG) □

Who Did What?

Votjech Mastny: *Russia's Road to the Cold War*; Columbia University Press; New York.

This is an excellent study of Soviet foreign policy from the German attack in June 1941 through the Potsdam Conference of July 1945, with a fine introduction dealing with Soviet policy between the World Wars, and Tsarist policy before 1917. Mastny's principal contribution is his use of recently available Eastern European communist sources. While it is not always easy to agree with his interpretations, they are invariably well argued.

Mastny stresses, perhaps overstates, the uncertainty of Stalin's policy before the Normandy invasion and to a lesser extent until the end of the European war. Though Stalin's intentions were basically aggressive, Mastny thinks that he found it hard to gauge the amount of resistance to be expected from the Western powers. Mastny thinks he also feared that the West would not carry out its promise to invade France. For a period in 1943 he toyed with the possibility of reaching a separate peace with Germany. Ironically, the West's attempts to reach a *modus vivendi* with Stalin merely provoked him to go further.

Mastny's accounts of the role of "sphere-of-influence" concepts, relations between the Czechoslovak government-in-exile and the Soviets, and the Yalta conference are particularly ad-

mirable. This reviewer doubts that Stalin was as fearful of a Western refusal to invade France as Mastny believes, or that Stalin's peace feelers to the nazis were really very serious. But

Nahas's Warning

Gabriel G. Nahas: *Keep Off the Grass*; Pergamon Press; New York.

This book will tell you everything you need to know about marijuana, and—if you like to get high—more than you want to hear. Dr. Nahas, a research pharmacologist at Columbia University, explains the history of marijuana and tells how the weed really works: and the results bode ill for any user who treasures his brain, DNA or future progeny.

Nahas presents a well-written narrative of his journeys to Morocco, his work with world-class scientists, and the continual brush-off which their

Russia's Road to the Cold War is undoubtedly a major contribution to the literature of wartime diplomacy and the Cold War, one that future researchers will find indispensable. (AJL) □

research got from the social scientists and media types who were looking for better news for the dopers in their entourage. Again and again, "only those sections of the reports favorable to the notion that marijuana is a harmless drug were emphasized." The rest will be ignored by a good portion of the population of the Western world, who seem intent on blowing their minds to the tune of the "good news" manufactured by pseudointellectual hustlers who shape the American popular culture according to the principle that if the facts prove them wrong—the worse for the facts. (CM) □

Defying History

Mircea Eliade: *The Forbidden Forest*; translated from Romanian by Mac Linscott Ricketts and Mary Park Stevenson; University of Notre Dame Press; Notre Dame, Indiana and London.

Both fiction and epic, *The Forbidden Forest* is an exceptional book about war and peace. Not unlike the Russian masterpiece bearing that title, Eliade's novel transcends the particulars of its subject matter—in this case, Romania at the outset of the Second World War—to explore the agonies of man's condition, his inevitable recourse to violence as he fails to understand others and, above all, himself. At once myth and reality, *The Forbidden Forest* sets out to "found a new world"—which is yet the world as we know it but also the world beyond appearance, the much more permanent world of dream and symbol. The central character of the novel, Stefan Viziru,

inhabits them both, painfully conscious of his inability to attain a cosmos of genuine serenity. The result, evidently, is a paradox: desiring to escape desire, Viziru succumbs to it by loving passionately two women, hurting them both even as he wants nothing so much as to make them both supremely happy; yearning to escape history he is doomed to live it fully—jailed on mistaken charges, caught in the flames of London, and finally losing his wife and baby without a trace in a bombardment of Bucharest. Viziru, an existential hero too keenly alive to opt for nihilism, is yet hopelessly aware of his need to escape hopelessness itself, to surrender circumstances and contingency for a corner of infinity. Except that infinity must come in finite packages: a secret room, colors on an unfinished painting, a car that might transport him and his lady into another universe but is still

no more than a car.

Mircea Eliade, world-renowned historian of religion, constructs each symbol half-consciously, knowing that all existence has a share of the universal yet is irrevocably particular, with its hapless loves and often pathetic pains—more hopeless for its limitations but also, of course, more beautiful.

The political dimensions of this novel are rather complex, as befits a complex situation: during the Second World War Romania had first been an ally of Germany, then fought alongside Russia—the fate of a small country at the mercy of larger forces. And yet this novel is not about politics, not about history but, in a sense, against it; Eliade writes about the destiny of men caught within its forces, indeed, about Destiny itself. In truth, each character in the novel defies history in his own way—forever in vain as fate catches up with each of them. At the conclusion of the novel, Stefan Viziru rides with his former mistress (now married to another, a man she cannot love) in a car—not, however, to infinity, not even to purgatory, but to loneliness: the loneliness of another person's destiny—as limited, as stark, as one's own. But the meeting is in a forest, the forest of symbol and all possibility, and within it they become merely a man and a woman ready to surrender to memory—that vestibule of eternity open to each of us. (JGP) □

Seton-Watson's Analysis

Hugh Seton-Watson: *The Imperialist Revolutionaries*; Hoover Institution Press; Stanford, California.

Professor Seton-Watson has written a short, but valuable and informative follow-up to his classic history of communism, *From Lenin to Khrushchev*. This study of the polycentric communism of the 1960's and 1970's concentrates on analyzing communist

policies and strategies, notably the "parliamentary road to power," and social situations on which communists have capitalized.

Controversial crises such as Vietnam, Chile, Czechoslovakia and Portugal are discussed briefly. Seton-Watson shows that "Eurocommunism" is neither a devious Soviet stratagem nor the development of an independent, reliably democratic movement. The treatment of the Soviet-Chinese conflict and the obscure communist or semicomunist regimes that have appeared in Ethiopia, the Congo (Brazzaville) and South Yemen is skimpy, but compared with what this book offers that is a mild flaw.

Seton-Watson's analysis of the changes in the world situation since

1960, and his analysis of communist successes and failures since then, is disquieting. Despite the "tremendous defeat" suffered by the United States in Vietnam and growing hostility to the West in the "Third World," communist parties have made less progress there than was expected in the early 1960's—though Seton-Watson sees disastrous possibilities in southern Africa and the Middle East. In the advanced countries, however, communists have been more successful than was expected. Despite the conflicts in the Red World, the demoralization of the free nations and the growth of Soviet power pose a serious threat. He warns, "unless current attitudes of mind can be changed, even the best of policies will fail." (AJL) □

In Focus

Epstein's Honest Effort

Seymour Epstein: *Love Affair*; Doubleday & Co.; New York.

What happens when a man and woman—who once loved each other, but who both married someone else—meet 20 years later?

Once upon a time, when one married one stayed that way; infidelity existed of course, but the routine approach to it was quite different from what we now read about in the daily newspapers. A gradual removal of the rudiments of fidelity and monogamy, culminating in the behavioral chaos of the 60's and 70's, has left men and women with few guidelines for ordering the more romantic aspects of their existence. Consequently, the absence of these conventional supports results in almost as many solutions as there are affairs.

Each of Epstein's characters portrays a different aspect of the man-woman relationship. Gabe Michelson is a decent, thoughtful married man; Evelyn White is divorced, independent and has a lover, a neurotic author. Joanna, Eve-

lyn's best friend, is "desperate" for a man. Contrasted against Gabe and Evelyn's affair is the disintegrating marriage of Jeff and Laura, whose function seems to be that of showing just how nasty and vindictive people can be when falling out of love. It's left to Gabe and Evelyn to illustrate the manner in which mature people are supposed to approach marriage, a love affair, divorce.

Epstein has made an honest attempt to examine how men and women feel when they know their love will hurt other people. Contrary to media hype, a love affair is not all glamour and fun; it also involves making choices and rejections. Evelyn's lover copes with rejection by turning to the bottle and to the insecure Joanna, who eventually commits suicide, leaving Evelyn with a burden of guilt. Gabe has a wife, who represents habit and obligation more than love, and two teen-age children. It becomes clear that you can't always "do your own thing" without hurting someone, and it's to his credit that Epstein attempts to make some sort of

statement about that fact. Unfortunately, he seems to be unable to define what he wants to say. (BK) □

Waste of Money

Pride and Liberal Prejudice

James Aldridge: *Goodbye Un-America*; Little, Brown & Co.; Boston.

by Becki Klute

A man denounces his best friend as un-American, marries his ex-wife and adopts his son. This is the plot of James Aldridge's propaganda tract disguised as a novel; his real subject, however, is America and Americanism, both of which he seems to loathe.

With flat, paper-doll characters he attempts to encapsulate what he sees as Americanism—flag-waving, “my-country-right-or-wrong” fanaticism, and the “yes - but - there's - so - much - wrong” school of thinking. Pip, a blue-blooded New Englander is the “yes, but . . .” man. He is extolled as intelligent, multilingual and “almost always right.” Lester, the flag-waving patriot, is portrayed as a rather thickheaded hick, the “immigrant son of Polish and Czech parentage.” They meet at *Time* magazine during World War II and a sort of friendship evolves wherein they continually discuss what America “really” is, or should be, or used to be—always on opposite sides of the fence.

In order to keep all this from looking too much like ideological agitprop pulp, Mr. Aldridge introduces sex in the form of Judy—a virtuoso of bitchery and manipulation. After leading on both Pip and Lester, she decides that Pip's background (and money) would be more appropriate to her lifestyle and marries him. Thus the stage is set for a sub-

Mrs. Klute is on the editorial staff of the *Chronicles*.

conflict between the two men.

Eventually, the bumbling hick denounces the spiffy man-about-town to a McCarthy committee, allegedly in self-defense—Lester himself was once enamored of communism and the only way to prove his complete change of heart was to betray his best friend. This, of course, underscores the innate knavishness of a communist-turned-patriot. Pip, made a nearly broken man by his treatment at the hands of the McCarthyites, escapes to France, where he ekes out a living of sorts.

The two men are brought together by the machinations of Judy, now married to Lester. She insists that Pip forgive

Lester because Lester is dying. But Pip can't quite forgive, and Mr. Aldridge seems to view this as a left-radical virtue of strength: “I've been as generous as I can be . . .” said Pip, “. . . he needs a bigger absolution than I can give him.”

And there we have it—the much abused “true” American of the WASP-liberal variety, his nobility shining through the blackness of McCarthyism and betrayal, behaves with supreme dignity. The “immigrant son” is dying of cancer—his just deserts, no doubt, for his fanatical patriotism. All in all, Mr. Aldridge has churned out a transparent condemnation of inadmissible nonliberal attitudes and called it a novel. □

Rossman's Black Hole

Michael Rossman: *New Age Blues: On the Politics of Consciousness*; E. P. Dutton; New York.

If the human-potential movement of the 1970's was disjointed and rambling, then *New Age Blues* accurately reflects this phenomenon in both style and content.

Michael Rossman, an activist in the social revolution, seemingly has had a unique opportunity in terms of participation and proximity to his human-potential subject. He has failed to present his relationship in a readable fashion. His essays follow no logical progression and his first-person format seems to come from notes in a personal journal rather than any orderly proof.

In addition, his essays are pockmarked with hip jargon, “. . . while around me grew the funky subinstitutional structure which embodied them, and while I worked on body. Shortly after I first felt clearly the ch'i flow in someone's meridians . . .”

To Rossman's credit, he has apparently put much thought and time into “experiencing” his work. He raises a cogent point when he acknowledges the powerful, subtle fraud some *nouveaux* gurus perpetrate upon naive seekers of enlightenment. But the overall feeling is that *New Age Blues* must undoubtedly be Rossman's own as he tries to support the edge of his own black hole with renditions of a 1960's view of the 1970's. (JDH) □

Books in the Mail

The Business of Organized Crime: A Cosa Nostra Family by Annelise Graebner Anderson; Hoover Institution Press; Stanford, California. A study of organized crime and its impact on our society.

Wealth of Nations in Crisis by Ronald C. Nairn; Bayland Publishing; Houston. A look at methods for optimizing human economic activity and the inhibitors to its growth.

Karl Marx: Racist by Nathaniel Weyl; Arlington House; New Rochelle, New York. A careful documentation of Marx's and Engels's racist-elitist views.

Roosevelt, Churchill, and the World War II Opposition: A Revisionist Autobiography by George T. Eggleston; The Devin-Adair Company; Old Greenwich, Connecticut. The story of a man who resisted U.S. involvement in World War II and the consequences of his opposition.

Stage

Puny, but How Great . . .

Hugh Leonard: *Da*; A Hudson Guild Theatre-Craig Anderson Production; Directed by Melvin Bernhardt.

This is a play about an Irish Archie Bunker who has infinitely larger ambitions: to symbolize the traps of paternal love. Since he is also infinitely less charming, witty, comical and richly designed than Archie—while at the same time attempting to solve some of the weightiest dilemmas of human interrelationships (with the help of one-liners infinitely duller than Archie's)—the end effect is boring and disheartening. Thus, Archie's low-brow musings on religion, society or feelings, trivial and shallow as they sometimes are, suddenly acquire a glitter of unpretentiousness which borders on art when cast against those of *Da*.*

Literature about simple but charming humanness and comical grumbling has a great tradition and countless protagonists who have seeped into proverbs, idioms, archetypal references in most languages of the Western world. Hugh Leonard's *Da*, an all-too-human curmudgeon who is both obnoxious and precious, is not going to make it on such a scale. The playwright does not succeed in doing anything more than once again filling the stage with the same superannuated exasperating darling who has been made commonplace by Hollywood for years. However, there is one aspect of Mr. Leonard's work, or rather its reception and success, that should elicit attention.

The play prospers because of its audiences. Its inoffensive, platitudinous humor draws good-natured laughs; people obviously enjoy its tone, ambience, type of entertainment. That's certainly a positive contribution, and no one should deny its sociocultural value.

*An obvious abbreviation of Dad or Daddy.

The disturbing aspect is what the Manhattan-based assemblage of critics has made of it. Because of its reception by the public, and not on its own merits, *Da* became the recipient of four Tony Awards, the New York Drama Critics' Circle Award, the Drama Desk Award and the Outer Critics' Circle Award.

However we approach this phenomenon, we must flatly state that it's a squalid approach to critical duties. The sky-high elevation of mediocrity is a cultural negative, a corruption of cultural substances which, in the long run, ceases to be an inconsequential trifle, or gaffe, and threatens some of the subtler textures of cultural life. Lowering public tastes is, *à la longue*, as much of a menace as outright praise for cynicism, wrong ideology, immorality for

cultural kicks. The endless parade of poets laureate, novelists laureate, playwrights laureate, film directors laureate, who are so vastly inferior to what was once considered necessary for laurels, is a distressing occurrence; it proves the monopoly of certain forces in culture whose principle is intolerance to adverse views and which therefore breeds ignorance of past achievements in theater, movies, literature, art, writing and popular music. This cynical sellout of standards threatens culture as a whole—and the New York critics are too smart not to know it. If they sell out, it's because most of them have become servile to the Liberal Culture's hierarchy of values, whose commandment is: Trash that serves us is Art by our fiat. (ES) □

Screen

An Anti-ERA Statement from Manhattan and Other Poignancies

***Kramer vs. Kramer*; Written and Directed by Robert Benton; Columbia Pictures.**

***The Marriage of Maria Braun*; Written and Directed by Rainer Werner Fassbinder; A New Yorker Films Release.**

***American Gigolo*; Written and Directed by Paul Schrader; Paramount Pictures.**

by Eric Shapearo

Not since *The Kid*, *The Champ* and Al Jolson singing "Sonny Boy" has the theater's darkness been so soaked with weepiness. The old Hollywood specialty—the man-little boy feedback of sentimentalities—is again at work, and with

considerable success both as art and as business. However, there are several interesting innovations. Jolson's emotion-drenched song was addressed to the *petit bourgeois* sense of family coziness, to lower-east-side immigrant aesthetics. Both *The Kid* and *The Champ* were burdened with that inimitable Big Studio cuteness which possessed the magic to make their characters endearing, their one-dimensionality, even silliness, notwithstanding. Justin Henry (Billy), the little hero of *Kramer vs. Kramer*, infuses into the movie a genuineness of so much richness and nuance that it makes him not only authentic but edifying. For his morning walk to the bathroom, in which all the inexpressible frustrations of a 7-year-old at dawn are visualized through silhouette and gait,

he deserves an Oscar.

The movie is a minimasterpiece in which, for the first time in years, an American film tries to balance content and form, substance and technique. It is shot in a style of sparse but meaningful dialogue which successfully delineates and interconnects the characters, even secondary ones, instead of carelessly splashing their images on the screen. Its very inner tension is an admirable attempt to fuse bona fide melodrama with a valid social issue. A compromise is finally reached and the audience gets a pulsation of a high-powered affectivity together with an insight into the moral shades and subtleties of current social sloganeering. One's final impression is of the lameness of fashionable rhetoric: Mrs. Kramer and her case seem to have been constructed solely of ERA lingo—full person, equality at the price of differentiation, new roles in life, work and aspirations, sameness in exchange for saneness. However, when it comes to obtaining what she unilaterally wants, covets and has decided to get no matter what the cost, she resorts to the ancient and ultimate argument—that there's no parity between motherhood and fatherhood, that the former is better and must be privileged. In other words, everything *from* the man, nothing *to* him—a timeless (and overwhelmingly successful) postulate which feminists claim to have never heard. And, though the movie ends on a twist that supposedly renders justice to Mr. Kramer and his plight (Mrs. Kramer gives up her demands, walks into an elevator to vanish vertically forever, leaving the two males to their rapport), a feeling remains—at least in this reviewer—that the final message is to leave people alone with their emotions and dismiss both knavish journalism and social doctrinairism from their affairs.

* * *

The Marriage of Maria Braun is a rich, complex, visually mature movie deeply flawed in a familiar, even silly,

way. Maria Braun is a lush German blonde in the Blue Angel tradition who pulls herself up by her own bootstraps from post-World War II misery and degradation. She manipulates her femininity and men to her own advantage, but she does it with integrity, intelligence and a particular sense of private vision which places her in the category of a fascinating human being—talented, enterprising, sensitive and uncompromisingly honest. She perishes in a ludicrous accident, rather *deus ex machina*. Her untimely, senseless death is unmotivated by either sequence of events or morality, unless we blame it on her natural nervousness at the prospect of finally going to bed with her own husband, whom, because of the vicissitudes of life, she has betrayed with others to his peculiar advantage (it seems incoherent, but it is firmly rooted in the film's literary reality). Immediately thereafter, Mr. Fassbinder flashes on the screen the negatives of Adenauer, Erhard and Helmut Schmidt, German postwar leaders, as if blaming them for what happened. A perceptive lady who was with me in the theater remarked that Mr. Fassbinder is both a Marxist and homosexual, which makes him dislike both women and the *Wirtschaftswunder*, and makes him determined to point out the inner corruption of the new German reality and search for the inherent connection of capitalist politics with feminine wiles and bitchiness. To me, all that was rather confusing, the more so as Mr. Fassbinder's misogyny surely helps him to render womanhood ravishingly stylish. Despite his biological rejection of the feminine, we thus get one of cinematic literature's finest portraits of a woman. Fassbinder sees womanhood in all its complexity and multiplicity; he may be an adversary, but his dual personality of the misogynist/artist compels him to give testimony to that specific greatness of womanhood so maltreated by the feminist ordinance manuals which are peddled these days as novels and movies.

The message is indeed very befuddled.

Germany's lot after its debacle was, after all, quite adequate for Maria Braun's progress—by tenacity combined with incredibly hard work, enterprise and strength of Teutonic character, Germany found its way out of degrading poverty into an apotheosis of democratic capitalism where the entire society now enjoys the well-being of a high-quality civilization. These are admirable national characteristics which, perhaps, do not entirely redeem Germany's sin or erase its guilt, but which cannot be condemned in art that pretends to sophistication. The social context of Mr. Fassbinder's movie is therefore embarrassingly poor, his journalistic conceited political verdict smacks of cheap agitprop—it's unconvincing, even fatuous.

What makes sense, even becomes a gratifying contribution to current movie-making, is Mr. Fassbinder's delicate touch in delineating characters, endowing them with interest (or passion, if need be) for one another. Maria Braun has, through the movie, a most captivating rapport with herself. It gives her a multidimensionality of which the present Hollywood film boutique cannot even dream, and plenty of affection from those who watch her from the darkness of the movie house. She appeals to both common sense and moral instincts. And neither "psychoanalysis" nor "couch" are mentioned even once in the entire movie.

* * *

American Gigolo, its trivial artifice notwithstanding, can serve as a useful case study of what has happened to romance in the modern arts. One quickly acquires a palpable sensation that everyone involved with its production, as well as the belabored protagonists, are panting for the lyricism of romance. However, modernity has its own dues: thus, instead of, say: "Princess, close your eyes, I wish to tell you my heart . . ." the love dialogue between two persons who have just met and will soon be unable to breathe without one another,

goes: "I want to f--- you."

Aside from that, the movie, a grim tale about a male whore, is midway between a *roman de mœurs* and a thriller. Such a theme, in order to succeed as either realism or parable, must be saturated with wise cynicism and subdued eroticism. However, Mr. Schrader, the creator of *American Gigolo*, demonstrates an awe-inspiring talent for eviscerating even the tiniest cynical or erotic innuendo, leaving the movie as antiseptic as an emergency room and as suggestive as a police report. Mr. Schrader's heavy-handedness is imposing: he seems to ignore even the most elementary rules, according to which a great warrior must be couched in layers of modesty, even clumsiness, in order to make a dramatic impact. Likewise, an alleged stud must be shrouded in understatements and intimations in order to increase his erotic credibility. Instead, Mr. Schrader bows to the rules of the Liberal

Culture and shows his sexual muscleman in complete nudity. Inevitably, the audience muses: "What's the big deal?" and the excitement is equal to paging through an anatomy text.

The movie is rated R, but when I saw it there were a number of 12- and 15-year-old boys in the theater. Since movies, from their inception, have proved to be a powerful supplier of role models, and as the male whore on screen is handsome, chic, charming, dazzlingly clothed, and—at the end—good and noble to boot, I can safely aver its social impact. I can bet that those 12-year-olds in the audience will no longer dream about following in the footsteps of Shane, Ringo Kid or Gary Cooper in *High Noon*; everyone will consider becoming an American gigolo. This problem has not been brought up in any of the collective of American film critics' reviews published on Mr. Schrader's movie (at least none that I've read). □

wielders and German note-takers does not affect the purity and sensuousness of *this* building, consecrated to the memory of love. The Taj is India's redeeming feature.

Alexandria was a disappointment. I went there in search of its glorious founder, its Musaion, Caesar's footsteps, Ptolemy, Euclid and Theophrastus, Arius and Athanase. All I found was a decrepit Arab town, unworthy of these memories. There is simply no continuity here between old and new, and the aggressive vendors of plastic wallets do not appear to have heard of the drama of the Egyptian queen and the Roman general. Even the five-star hotel in what was once Farouk's pleasure garden brings only disappointments, defective plumbing and questionably clean bed linen. In the lobby, Egyptian television features the interminable parade of Sadat's army.

One usually arrives in Nepal directly from the steamy horrors of Calcutta or Benares; after having held one's nose for days, one takes in gulps of clean mountain air. The sight of Anapurna, Gaurizankar, Mt. Everest lifts your spirits, you feel—you are—on top of the world. The pure visual sensation is enhanced by the knowledge of what the sight means, its uniqueness, its role in history, the sufferings and joys it has witnessed, perhaps caused, the reactions it has prompted. Mt. Everest is Edmund Hillary, the Tserpas, frozen limbs and undaunted courage, the statement by French alpinist Herzog that "I had to climb it because it was there!"

If the Himalayas are exalting, the Buddhist *stupas* (shrines) of Nepal's holy cities are debasing. Even the best *stupas* and temples are usually repugnant in their vulgarity and gaudiness: they are reminiscent of Luna Park—bright colors, mirrors, bells, idols, plastic objects, painted statues, gold-plated ridiculous domes, 100-foot-long Buddhas with the rouged lips and plucked eyebrows of a floozy. The central *stupa* in Katmandu is worse: dirty

Correspondence

Letter from the Eastern Hemisphere: Random but Conscientious Notes

by Thomas Molnar

Hegel said that in modern times the reading of the morning paper had replaced Bible reading. If so, then in our ultramodern times traveling has replaced newspapers. Not that travel is today a pleasant affair; mass tourism has ruined the pleasure and rendered even ordinary observation a questionable enterprise. Chartered tours, standardized food, organized excursions and homogenized hotels wrap the purposeful traveler in invisible plastic and make him see only the artificial in the most exotic places. Even as travel is made technically easier (by jets, guides, pre-

paid everything), it is also becoming harder and more challenging to unravel what distant lands and people really are like beneath the clichés and vacation posters.

India seems unchanged in its ineradicable dirt, misery, indecency: in India one loses one's *joie de vivre*. Thus, facing the Taj Mahal for the first time is almost shattering. The pure octagon of marble is proportioned so that one forgets its size and is content simply with its design, which is exquisite. As with all edifices of white marble, including the Parthenon, its gleam in the noonday sun effaces the angles: one must return at sunset, the gray then helps the white to manifest its volume, its tactile impact. The milling crowd of saffron-robed Buddhist monks, Japanese camera-

Dr. Molnar lives in New York City when he is not traveling.

and commercialized, it does not elicit the slightest feeling of the sacred, although pilgrims swarm around it. And on the very steps where pilgrims approach the Living Buddha, monkeys are copulating.

The Grand Hotel in Taipei is the first major object to leap to the eye—an enormous, red-columned building, 14 stories high, made to look even taller as it stands on a hill. It has the elegant double roof of Chinese temples, and the façade is in all sorts of colors—blue, green, yellow, with bright red dominating. To Western eyes it is a monster, and the impression does not improve inside the lobby: as vast as Times Square, with enormous engraved walls, a huge marble stairway, a carpet that would cover the floor of St. Peter's.

Day after day I stared at this ensemble, and on the third or fourth day I found it beautiful; the massiveness became articulated, the colors began settling into harmonious sequences, the vast dimensions yielded to graciousness. A week did not pass before I was fully captivated. Then came the Japanese invasion, that is, the tourists. The Chinese are supple and dignified; Nippon's sons are rigid and tumultuous. They carry cameras the way zebras have stripes: inseparably. The Grand Hotel, with which I was carrying on a visual love affair, turned into a vast object for picture-taking, its gay dignity threatened by little men running around in hordes who photographed incessantly. What do two, three, ten, fifty Japanese photograph? Each other. The background can be anything. I imagine their photo albums at home with myriads of pictures inscribed: *I* with the Grand Hotel, *we* with the Corcovado, *she* with the Roman Forum, *he* with the Sydney Opera. I stayed two days longer than these photographing robots, and the Grand Hotel regained its proportion and charm.

In Cyprus, since the Turks invaded and occupied the northern portion of the island in 1974, the north is unvisi-

able, and life is concentrated in the south—where Aphrodite was born, the crusading Lusignan barons ruled, and Archbishop Makarios walked the tight-rope between Greek, Turkish and British ambitions. Fully one quarter of Cyprus's population became refugees overnight, fleeing the rampaging, pillaging Turkish *soldatesca*. True, their fate is infinitely better than that of most deportees, boat people and re-educated class enemies in gulags, but a special torture is reserved for them. The island is so small that the peasants can see their land across the U.N.-held Attila Line. The burghers of Famagusta see their apartment windows from Paralimni, the merchants of Nicosia see their abandoned stores across the street.

Refugees—in Cyprus, Palestine, Lebanon, Hong Kong—I met them everywhere. If *Time* magazine were to plan an issue for the year 2000 about "The Man of the Century," he ought to be the Refugee, robbed, enslaved, drowned, raped, tortured. Yet, the Cypriot Greek refugee enjoys an exceptional status. Nowhere have I seen more heroic efforts to house and feed refugees, to give them back their physical and moral integrity, to give them work, status, a future. And life in the Turkish zone is deteriorating—even for the Turks.

Papua New Guinea is one of the "last frontiers" of touristland. Only Australian vacationers and German *concierges* can afford to make the trip, the first because they live nearby, the second because they are rich. The island is beautiful, although only half of it is "visitable," the other half is held by the Indonesian army. Cannibalism is still practiced on the Highland, many people go around near-naked, and tribal vendettas end in terrible brawls, men fighting with poisoned arrows and hacking their enemies to pieces. All this does not prevent London from including a Papua delegation in the commission which will supervise whether the Rhodesian elections unfold in a truly democratic fashion.

The lands where I traveled were

mostly Islamic and Buddhist; Christianity is present sporadically in Moslem countries (the Copts in Egypt), in larger numbers in Buddhist and Hindu lands. From our one-dimensional Western perspective, we expect religions slowly to be absorbed by prosperity, education, technology. But much of the Third World, while adoring this new holy trinity, is not abandoning religious beliefs. In fact, it reacts to Western agnosticism with a fanatic reaffirmation in some places, passive resistance in others. Generally, however, ancestral beliefs can only weakly resist city life. A young man in Pagun told me that his generation does not believe in Buddha's divinity or in any sort of gods, only in "good men" with ethical teachings. Yet in Rangoon, in Sri Lanka, in Benares, religion is very much alive, although alien to our way of thinking. In Taiwan, at Chengchi University, the difference was best explained: "You Western people go to church on Sunday, conduct scientific experiments on Monday, attend political meetings, devote yourselves to your family, admire art or nature the following days. You have an individualistic, analytic mentality, able to cut itself up into segments and atoms. This we cannot accept; things fuse in our experience, the same principle must apply in all we do."

Thus East and West are likely never really to meet. Although St. Paul was converted on the Damascus Road, the Omayyad mosque now standing near that spot represents a world totally different from that of Christians or Jews. The main temple in Rangoon seems more a bazaar than a place of worship. Hindu and Buddhist shrines are guarded by stone monsters, and the faithful make a frightful din on feast days to scare away the evil spirits. "Westernization" is only superficial, and it will further recede as the West surrenders its outposts and becomes an exclusively economic partner. The next century may not bear the Western stamp. □

The American Proscenium

The Olympics

Almost every student of Soviet affairs — on both the right and left, and in the center — agrees that the boycott of the Moscow Olympics will be a tremendous blow to the Soviets in terms of real politics, prestige, image, economics and internal stability.

In retrospect, only an utterly limited mind would object to the statement that the world's participation in the Berlin 1936 Olympics was a fateful mistake. The American athletes, sons and daughters of a society that was not perfect but certainly decent, had to bow their heads and salute the German swastika, which was soon to become the symbol of some of the worst aggressions ever committed against mankind. Among them was the victorious Jesse Owens, a telling argument against racism, but he too had to salute and bow his head before the gloating nazi scum in the tribune, whose crimes-to-come acquired a certain legitimacy and honor from the American salute.

That the whimpering American athletes can envision themselves saluting the Soviet flag at the Moscow stadium and still claim that they are dignified citizens of a free country, familiar with the moral standards of a lawful democracy, can be explained only if one concludes that their perceptions and consciences are of the same stuff as their parallel bars or starting blocks. They obviously do not identify the Soviet emblem with murdered Afghan peasants, or the Soviet massacres which will undoubtedly be revealed in days to come. Accepting honors from the benignly smirking Politbureau assassins seems, to some of our athletes, unconnected with honoring the communist mob and accepting their sins and wickedness. And this honor is exactly what Brezhnev wants from the Olympics; he must show his Russian

slaves how he, his slave-holding and his boundless evil-doing are meekly respected by other nations.*

The against-the-boycott reasoning and rhetoric of Lord Killanin, the International Olympic Committee, assorted track-and-field altruists, senile French counts suddenly turned pacifists, and idealistic weightlifters escapes the sense of reality of anyone with an average I.Q. Since the U.S.S.R. was admitted to the Olympiad after World War II, there has been nothing but politics in the games. The communists have openly announced that a winner reflects the superiority of his country's social system, and have ruthlessly gone after victories in the stadiums for purely political reasons. They brazenly forced the West to accept their regimented professional gladiators as amateur sportsmen, thereby ramming down the throats of the Western "incorruptible" press a lie of the same totalitarian caliber as their recent claim that they invaded Afghanistan to protect its people against a foreign aggression. Only twice have Olympic politics-as-usual yielded to warfare (which is, according to Clausewitz, the violent extension of politics): when desperate Hungarian water-polo players, at the news of the Russian invasion of Hungary in 1956, filled the Melbourne swimming pool with Russian blood; and when in 1972 in Munich, the PLO, a close ally of the U.S.S.R., murdered defenseless Israeli athletes with Russian weapons and

*We should point out that there are *some* American athletes who are able to see beyond the gymnasium; Jimmy Clark, a top-notch amateur boxer, not only publicly supports the boycott, but also refused to participate in an international boxing match recently held in Moscow, and the entire Muhammad Ali Athletic Club has stated that they will not go to Moscow, no matter what decision is made in the USOC or the IOC.

money, and, in all likelihood, with Russia's political blessing. In neither case did the moral dinosaurs like Avery Brundage and Lord Killanin even think about suspending the games; in their vision of the world, politics and sports do not mix.

The Carter administration should be duly commended for the idea of boycotting the Moscow Olympics, but chided for not having declared a unilateral withdrawal — without first looking around for support and company. Since its modern revival, the Olympics without Americans are not the Olympics, but merely an international tournament. Since the Soviets' entry, the Olympics have become a contest between communist robots and free Americans, with an occasional gold medal going to a New Zealand miler, a West German hammer thrower or a Kenyan long-distance runner. The political substance of this actuality has many faces: most Americans are unaware that every American gold medal, every humiliation of the Soviet team, is celebrated by inebriated crowds in the streets of Warsaw, Prague and Budapest. Let the Swedish and French sycophants go to Moscow and revere the giant Soviet star that shines over the napalmed bodies of Afghan children as well as Lenin Stadium. Without us, the Olympic games will offer all the excitement of a soccer match played with a tennis ball.

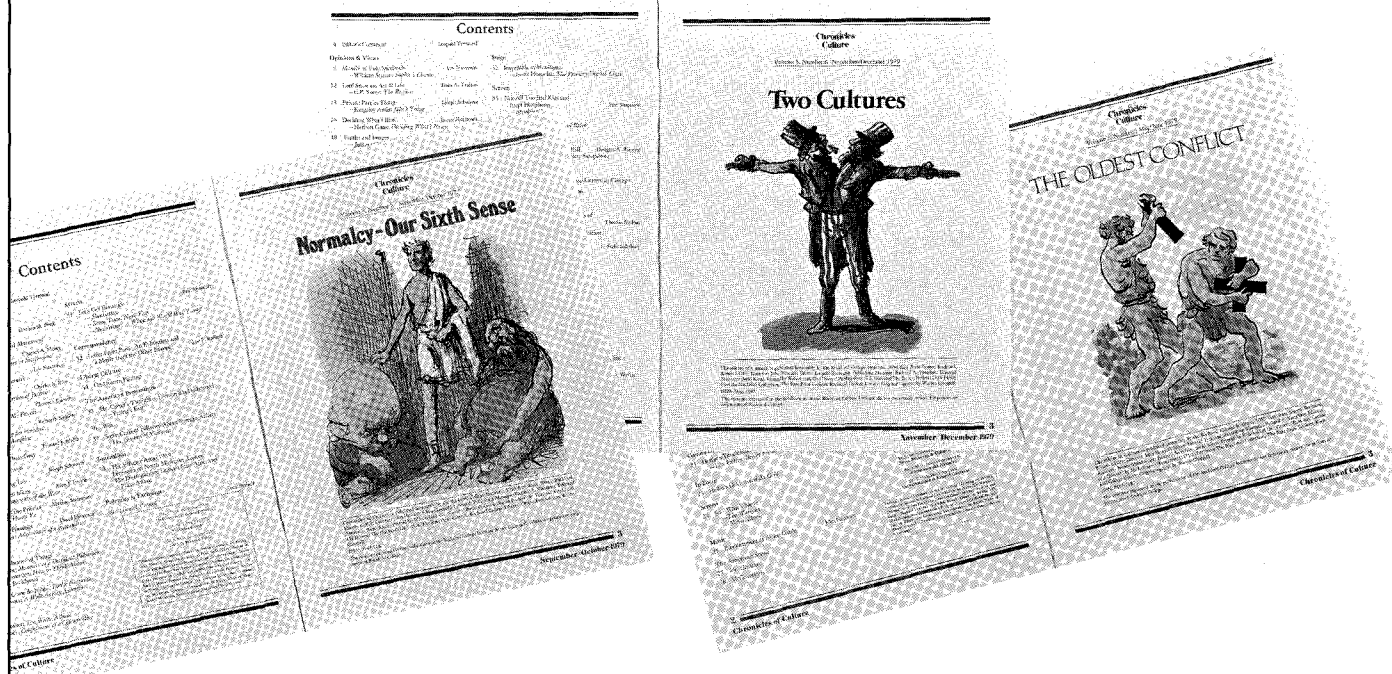
Why Are We Doomed?

Because we have George F. Kennan, and the Russians don't.

Does this mean that Mr. Kennan is a black character, bad guy, Russian operative, one of those against us, or just someone who wants to do us in?

None of the above.

Mr. Kennan is a distinguished American, a meritorious diplomatic representative, our former ambassador to Moscow, a noble gentleman who firmly stood up to the Soviets during the Truman/Stalin epoch, and who now enjoys



About us:

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—Richard Maltby, Jr., Director of
Ain't Misbehavin', winner of a
1978 Tony Award

"A review [in] . . . the *Chronicles of Culture* [is] . . . one bestseller to read less."

—*The Yale Literary Magazine*

"If you haven't seen *Chronicles*, it's worth a look because it is such a refreshing change from the normal diet of humanist cellulose."

—*The American Spectator*

About our kindness toward those we criticize:

"It was good of you to remember me in such a thoughtful way. I am pleased by your kindness and send you my best wishes."

—Jimmy Carter

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the status of being the pride of Princeton University. And he is widely regarded as one who knows the most about Russia. This, in all probability, is where our predicament begins: in connection with the Afghanistan story, Mr. Kennan has predicated:

"... the American view of the Soviet action appears to have run overwhelmingly to the assumption that it was a prelude to aggressive military moves against various countries and regions farther afield... this extravagant view of Soviet motivation rests, to date, exclusively on our own assumptions. I am not aware of any substantiation of it in anything the Soviet leaders themselves have said or done. On the contrary, Brezhnev has specifically, publicly and vigorously denied any such intentions."

We do not dispute Ambassador Kennan's estimation of the overall international situation, nor do we claim to know more than he about this situation's military and strategic consequences. However, that Mr. Kennan based his interpretations, predictions and recommendations on what "the Soviet leaders themselves have said," imbues us with despair. And if, after having read Gogol, de Custine, Saltikov-Shchedrin, Suchovo-Kobylin, Dostoyevsky and Merezhkovsky (any expert on the Russian soul, we presume, must have read *them*), and after having studied Machiavelli, Gobineau, Stirner, Nietzsche, Hitler, Lenin and Stalin (any liberal oracle on totalitarianism should have studied *them*), he still believes in what Brezhnev publicly denies, our panic is justified and our pessimism boundless. Ultimately, an analysis of the situation boils down to how to survive not a nuclear attack, but our own sages.

What's Going On?

The other day we entered an elevator in Chicago, one that we had been acquainted with for years. We were fa-

miliar with its walls and doors, covered from top to bottom with imagery and inscriptions which sociologists have recently labeled urban art and the poetry of the deprived, although their clinical symbolism and uncompromisingly descriptive semantics never struck us as either art or poetry. This time we had the feeling that something was missing. What made us uneasy was the fact that the doors and walls seemed relatively well-scrubbed, and in the middle of one clean space we noticed the following presentation:

Jim Loves Mary

 I love you!
 Jim forever!!!

It was a trying experience, as if something had crumbled in the till-now unshakeable universe. The next day we opened a recent issue of the *New York Review of Books*, and found there an article on Afghanistan by a Harvard professor in which he acknowledged America's moral and geopolitical necessity to defend herself against Soviet encroachment. This gave us again a vague feeling of the end of the world. Has anything of this kind ever been seen before in the pages of the *New York Review of Books*, where America once had only the right to figure as an inept dragon, belching vice and depravity, whom everybody on earth had a moral right to slay, while only distinguished Trotskyites whined about the Soviet Union's lack of gentleness? But more enigmatic and strange things were to come. *Time* ran an essay entitled "Back to Reticence!" (note the exclamation mark!), meticulously omitting all traces of *Time's* own record in promoting *Last Tango in Paris*, male brothels, etc. (all under the safe label of reporting on society and culture). Still, when *Time's* supercolporteurs of cheap truths have

to pretend an allegiance to "privacy," "self-discipline," "even inhibitions and a little puritanism," it gives us a heady, if puzzled, feeling that the shoddy merchandise they've been peddling does not sell too well any longer. Then, on TV, we saw people in Lake Placid celebrating the American hockey victory over the communists, and amidst the inebriated crowds, scruffy youngsters, looking like advertisements for a Ramones rock concert, kept kissing the American flag with tears of joy in their eyes.

What's going on?

It's hard to say, especially when most of the presidential candidates are spouting trivialities and only hockey players talk sense, like Mike Eruzione, the 25-year-old captain of the U.S. team, who explained his part in the incredible win this way: "I know I can't skate, I know I fall down a lot. But there are such things as intangibles, and I think I possess a lot of them..."

This, at least to our mind, makes Mike Eruzione one of the most inspiring and trustworthy thinkers in America.

Actors & Images

It seems worthwhile to quote from the interview which Mr. James Stewart, an actor from Hollywood's golden era, gave to the *New York Times* on the occasion of his reception of the American Film Institute's life-achievement award:

"'There's our son,' he says, pointing to a young lieutenant photographed in Vietnam, 'eight months before he was killed. He wanted to be a marine. He was a good marine. I think of him all the time. It was a terrible loss, but I don't see it as a tragedy. He went to college for us. He wasn't a very good student. He said he didn't want to be drafted, he wanted to be a marine. He became a good marine. He conducted himself honorably on the field of battle. You can't consider that a tragedy.'"

And the *Times* reporter adds:

"James Stewart still believes, quite simply, in God and America. He no longer swims in the winter, because, with the energy crisis, he thinks it is unfair to heat his pool." □

Journalism

History by WSJ

To inaugurate the 1980's, the *Wall Street Journal* ran an editorial by its publisher, Mr. Warren Phillips, in which he informed his readers that, and

we quote, "The editors and staff of the *Wall Street Journal* are acutely conscious of our responsibility to provide you with information and insights . . . and to do so accurately and fairly. We are dedicated to being worthy of your trust and confidence."

Prior to this pledge, we could read a puzzling sentence that went: "When the Founding Fathers provided for a free press, when Jefferson and before him John Milton and John Stuart Mill argued for press freedom . . ."

Oh my! We were always rather trustfully confident that the peak of John Stuart Mill's argumentative powers came roughly three-quarters of a century after those of Jefferson. □

Liberal Culture

The Afghan Follies

The newest liberal musical has opened in towns and on campuses, and it's going strong. Here is a sampling of the choicest numbers, arias, songs and dances of death (wish):

—*Nation*: "And there is no way . . . that the Russians could have abandoned the country altogether to a triumphant horde of Moslem insurgents, who would, in all likelihood, have fallen to fighting one another for years to come."

In other words: Finally, there's progress and order in Afghanistan; the mad religionists are under proper control with the full blessing of the *Nation's* democrats.

—*Village Voice*: "It may be true—as many sincere leftists in the U.S. and Europe argue—that the U.S.S.R. has been the worst possible champion of revolutions all over the world. The fact remains, however, that it is the only possible source of support in the world of real possibilities."

In other words: Let's do everything we

Philosophy in America

"O philosophy, thou guide of life, O thou explorer of virtue and expeller of vice!"

—Cicero, 45 B.C.

A mind-boggling revelation in ontology, perhaps even in the philosophy of creation, as articulated by a certain Mr. Schmeck, a science writer for the *New York Times*, and conveyed to us as the ultimate in syndicated wisdom by the *Chicago Tribune*:

"It is widely believed that aging has been an integral characteristic of life at least since the first multicelled plants and animals arose on earth."

Most people have noticed by now that the *Times*, in lieu of reporters, employs experts, advocates and investigators, while the *Chicago Tribune* makes do with critics. Both towers of knowledge are dedicated nowadays not to informing, but to forming our *Weltanschauung*. They do not spread obscurantism and ignorance as the yellow press once did, but enlightenment. One wonders which is worse. □

Persuasion At Work—Vol. III, No. 3, March 1980 "A COMMENTARY ON NADER'S OMINOUS SPRING OFFENSIVE"

"Many of the forces which are cooperating in the Big Business Day project have come up through the training grounds of ideological fanaticism. They have an utter disregard for facts, logic and civilized norms. They are motivated by ideological fervor and they are engaged in psychological warfare wherein distortions and lies are simply tools of the trade."

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can to destroy America's potential to oppose the only possible source of support for the *Village Voice*, its politics, its ideals, its clientele. Junkies, homosexuals, freaks from Eighth Street unite to defend the workers' paradise, so hated by our own working class!

—*Nation*: "The United States . . . should not further destabilize the region by selling arms to neighboring Pakistan."

In other words: The good, decent, conscientious liberals of the *Nation's* stripe are asking us to behave like those people who heard Kitty Genovese scream in agony and decided not to help her so as not to destabilize the neighborhood. It's not the Russian henchmen who are the troublemakers, but the Pakistanis, who may decide to defend their lives.

—Princeton University students, who are supposed to be learning how to think, carried antidraft demonstration slogans: "There's Nothing Worth Dying For" and "We Won't Fight for Exxon."

In other words: They displayed something that could be called the mentality of canaille, which means that they believe themselves immune to any fact, truth or logic, such as: 1) no one is asking them to die, only to register; 2) if they do fight, it won't be for Exxon, but for their own well being, guitars, grants, Cokes, overabundance of clothing, Baskin-Robbins ice cream, entertainment, joints, movies, drugs, pornographic magazines and peep shows, perennially full bellies, endless vacations, unrestricted procrastination, so they may continue to wallow in cars, bikes, stereos, have abortion privileges, best-in-the-world medical care, the unrestricted right to yell at their teachers and parents, to detest their government and announce this disgust at each step, and generally do whatever they want. If, by any chance, the Russians did occupy Princeton, all that would be gone forever. And if they do not comprehend the fact that they may express their view on what is worth dying for *is* what is worth dying for—it indicates that they are moral dwarfs of a quality that makes the rest of us wonder whether there's any need for preserving them.

—An anonymous student during an antiwar demonstration on the Berkeley campus: "Hell no, I won't go, certainly not before bombs drop on California..."

In other words: If the Princetonians displayed a canaille mentality which is perfectly comfortable with living well without obligations, down payments or IOU's, the Berkeleyan has demonstrated an advanced moronicity which makes

us doubt whether it's worthwhile having such students at all. In this instance, the onerous mental effort which it would take to inform him that when bombs are falling it may be too late to register indicates that I.Q. may be an ingredient missing from the student mind.

—Senator Edward Kennedy: "I do not think today that American policy should depend on what we think the Soviets *may* do. We should take actions on what the Soviets do."

In other words: If the Berkeley student represents the school of retarded thinking, Senator Kennedy proposes to eliminate thinking altogether. He advocates not even the canaille mentality, but the cerebral equipment of an amoeba which reacts only to external stimuli. As leadership is Mr. Kennedy's password, we can rest assured that he's perfectly able to lead protozoans.

The Superior Mind of Mr. Jon Voight, Oscar Winner

In *Rolling Stone*, we find an interview with Mr. Jon Voight, the cinematic idol of the American left. He declares himself to be a feminist. The fascinating coherence of his opinions sheds some light on both Hollywood intellectualism and why some Americans still feel unconvinced about ERA promises:

"I think the world is becoming more aware of the need to encourage the feminine and is beginning to see the absence of the feminine and how barren the world has become be-

cause of that absence . . . We should all be a hundred percent behind the ERA. Period. Otherwise, we should just put the women in one country and the men in another country. You know what I mean . . . And then there are groups that are the more reactionary groups—that are saying that it means we have to share bathrooms or something like that. I don't know what the hell they mean. [laughing] I don't mind sharing a bathroom with a lady. It doesn't scare the s-t out of me, you know what I mean?"

Between Us, Leaders . . .

Asked whether Senator Kennedy's surplus of carnal activities may be a presidential campaign issue, Ms. Gloria Steinem, the feminist conscience of Manhattan, responded:

"Yes. The issue is whether or not he perceives women as equal and serious human beings. Nobody's demanding fidelity in marriage . . ."

Surrealism

What's abstract in New York? *New York* magazine's political miniguru, reporting on Ronald Reagan, makes it lucidly transparent:

"His public anger . . . was usually directed at abstract targets—the Russians, welfare chiselers, student protesters, redwood trees, Democrats; an attack on anyone or anything more specific would be at variance with the courtly image he so assiduously cultivated."

You've Come a Long Way, Baby . . .

How a modern, liberated, self-conscious American woman sees an ideal man these days, according to a *Chicago Tribune* writer's in-depth study:

"He gives you the feeling he'd entertain you for hours with scintillating conversation; and when *he* finally de-

The Rockford Papers—Vol. 5, No. 2, March 1980: "The Cold War: A Report to the Presidential Candidate" by Alan J. Levine.

Available from the Rockford College Institute.

cided to make love to you, it would be slow, imaginative, and very, very satisfying." (emphasis added)

This is imposing progress from the wretched times of depersonalization and subjugation when, as William Faulkner once remarked, women were rarely seduced, but men were always chosen.

Alcoholism Revisited

The December *Harper's Bazaar* carried four ads for spiritous beverages within 202 pages.

Time, in a December issue of 115 pages, carried six ads of the same content.

Vogue, in the 314 pages of its December edition, carried twelve ads suffused with alcoholic messages.

Ms. magazine, the organ of militant feminism, carried eighteen ads of goodies that help one to enjoy and forget in only 144 pages.

Advertisers, as we all know, lavish their money on prospective markets. Does that tell us something about feminism?

Capitalism's Abysmal Immorality

It exists, we are the first to admit, when we read about Mr. Andy Warhol's reaction to the breakdown of détente with Russia in the wake of the invasion of Afghanistan, as imparted to us by *New York* magazine, the chief organ of warholism:

"'No more caviar? No more Russian vodka?' remarked a stunned Andy Warhol last week. 'Are you kidding?'

I mean, what are people going to do?'"

Although we generally shun excessively drastic metaphors, Mr. Warhol looks to us like the foulest excretion of our society. He has parlayed the utmost ugliness of intention and habit into wealth and celebrity status, never hesitating to use both to contaminate everything around him. He is a vile pornographer by the deepest instincts of his ego. When we think of all the hard-working people struggling to make ends meet on \$15,000 a year these days, Mr. Warhol's lament for caviar (at \$150 a pound) makes us believe that he is a festering abscess on our body, full of moral and existential pus, whose surgical removal is apparently impossible, thanks to an unholy alliance between transvestite capitalism and the liberal culture. □

Editor's Comment *continued from page 5*

on Fifth Avenue, but their guilt is only a part of the story. A larger part of the answer lies with the populist liberal who has succeeded during the last two decades in grafting odium onto simple-minded decorum, who has used his formidable opinion-molding power to denounce homely seemliness as reactionary, to degrade the plain integrity of the common folk—who are not perceived as people in a mind which is suffused with ideological vanity.

So standing there in the flagrant presence of a palpable fraud, or a taxing contradiction, or a rape of rudimentary fairness, I had to wonder: Whose side am I on? Am I on the side of ungainly decency, hamburger-eaters, elderly Dixieland devotees, the honest but narrow-minded ones—those who are just Americans to my liberal conversationalist with the dyed chest hair? Or do I go with those who are people by *Time*, Inc.'s fiat? With whom am I going to march—the starry-eyed immigrant to whom New York was supposed to be the port of entry to freedom, dignity and orderly peace of mind? With Americans, the depositaries of primary decencies, or people—the carriers of tantalizing promises and glamor? This was a feral quandary. But someone whom I respected told me once, in the old country, that he had a mother-in-law who was the most narrow-minded creature in the universe, but who never did any harm to anyone, so when she died, everybody praised her as the wisest human being to grace the existence of others. We all know that

narrow-mindedness is not always a source of blessings, public or private, that it often breeds the tyranny of ignorance, moves ugly mobs and results in poignant griefs and sorrows—but we, Americans, have somehow closed those chapters in our history and battened down the hatches from which savage willfulness occasionally escaped to contaminate the air we breathe.

Which puts me unequivocally on the side of the Babbitts of this world and this country, as ridiculed, maligned and held in contempt as they are. They helped me to defeat Hitler, they never wronged me. People did. I soon discovered that what people champion, chiefly in Ivy League universities, New York publishing houses, and at their fundamentalist meetings called cocktail parties where they absolve one another from their bigotries, is the right to accrue power and wealth by arrogating to themselves words that do not belong to them. Whenever I attempted to say something nice about Americans, *people* were hell-bent on seeing to it that the First Amendment did not apply to me, although every liar, traducer, traitor, blasphemer, cheat and degenerate was most welcome to bask in its warmth.*

—Leopold Tyrmand

*This is an excerpt from the volume of essays entitled *The Prudent Progressive or an Arcadia of New Wisdom*.

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